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Samuel F. Halfyard

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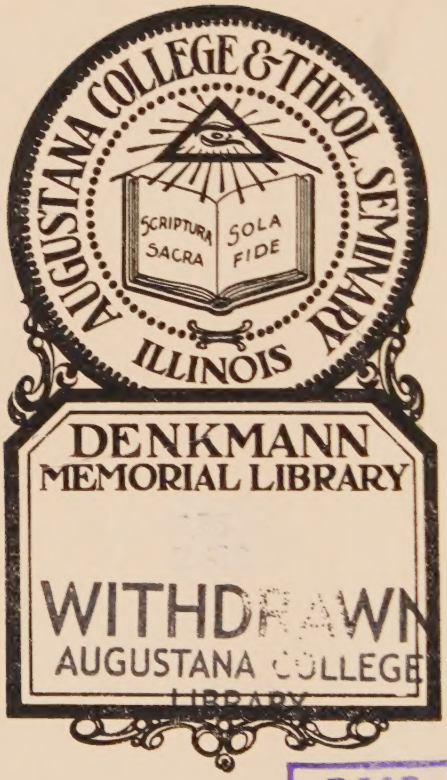

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CARDINAL TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL

Follet BY
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To My

Students,

Whose Diligence and Serious Purpose
Have Been My Inspiration
and Whose Quest for Truth
My Delight,

I Dedicate this Book.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	Preface	9
I.	Religion and Theology	13
II.	A Dynamic Gospel	43
III.	The Meaning of the Cross	67
IV.	Sin: Its Origin and Nature	111
V.	Sin: Its Penalty and Forgiveness	144
VI.	Faith and Reason	177
VII.	The Birth from Above	207
VIII.	Religion in Action	225
IX.	Appendix	249

PREFACE

This book is a companion volume to the author's Fundamentals of the Christian Religion. It aims to set forth the meaning of certain characteristic teachings of the gospel in the thought and language of the present day. Its purpose is to interpret certain essential doctrines of the Christian faith in concepts and thought forms that all can understand. The danger that continually confronts us in our intellectual formulations of religion is that they tend to lose contact with life and thus lose their power in the development of spiritual experience. Many have held that the doctrines and creeds of the Christian Church are final and that nothing can be added to or taken from them. Theology has been regarded by not a few as a closed system which cannot be improved either in thought or form. It is this spirit and attitude to Christian doctrine that constitutes a serious obstacle to a true appreciation of the religion of Christ. And this attitude must be changed if our doctrinal

constructions would be a worthy interpretation of the teachings of the Bible and the facts of the inner life. Theology is not a fixed but a progressive science. Like every other science, it unfolds and expands with the complexity of knowledge and a growing intelligence. It is therefore clear that the truths of the gospel and the content of Christian experience must be rightly conceived and explained in the light of our best thinking and in terms suited to the intelligence of the age. The Christian religion as a view about God, an experience of the heart, and an ethic of conduct must be understood and interpreted in forms of thought and style of speech that are intelligible to all. And it is only when this is done that the Christian faith can commend itself to the head as well as to the heart. It is only when the interpretation of the teachings of the Holy Scriptures correlates with the best culture and thought of the time in which it is given that the Christian religion can possess a large vitality and power. Indeed, unless the life of Christian believers be rooted in an intelligible and adequate view of those questions that center around the fact of redemption it, like a tree whose roots are unwatered by the rains of

heaven, will be deprived of its power and become an unsightly thing. It is with this idea in mind that the present volume is written. The last chapter is an appraisement of the gospel in terms of conduct and life.

While this book is intended primarily for ministers and students, the author has endeavored to present his thought in language and form that will be acceptable to the layman. The volume is for all who seek knowledge on the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. Should it be of use in helping any to a clearer understanding and a truer appreciation of the teachings of the gospel, its end will be accomplished.

Samuel F. Halfyard.

CHAPTER I

RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

The relation of religion to theology is the relation of fact to theory. Religion has to do with the facts of the spiritual life; theology seeks to explain the facts. Religion is experience; theology is our theory about the experience. Religion is an inner state of being which may be proclaimed by word and deed; theology is a doctrine to be held in the intellect and tested by the reason. The former is a discipline of the soul and rests on faith; the latter is a science and is created by the mind. The first is life and love, the second is thought and interpretation. Religion unites man to the Unseen by obedience and trust; theology is an attempt to embody the content of the gospel and of Christian experience in clear and self-consistent propositions. The one is a function of the spiritual part of man in his superhuman relations, the other aims to explore the field of Christian faith and teaching, give it scientific form,

reduce it to system, and exhibit as far as possible its reasonableness. Thus religion is the reality of which theology is the study.

It must, however, be borne in mind that while a distinction has been made between religion and theology, they are complementary and not separate things. They are not independent of each other, but are two aspects of the one whole. Indeed, they can no more be separated from each other than can the convex surface of a circle be separated from the concave. Religion can no more exist without theology than can theology without religion. Religion is the affectional side of the spiritual life, while theology is the intellectual. The two must be harmoniously blended; they form a synthesis and not an antithesis. The practical side of religion, the divine life in man, must be accompanied by the theoretical, the intellectual formulation of the contents of the inner life. Theology thus is no superfluous addition to religion, but an essential element in Christian experience, enabling the life of the soul to realize itself beauteously and full-orbed.

Though religion and theology are inseparably united, historically the former preceded the latter. The law that operates in

all other departments of life operates in religion; fact precedes theory, art precedes science, faith precedes logic. Religion as fact and experience came before religion as explanation and doctrine. As plant life preceded botany and the motions of the heavenly bodies astronomy, so religion as an affair of the heart preceded its intellectual and unified expression. This is particularly true of Christianity. The religion of Jesus existed long before it was formulated into credal statement. What the disciples of Christ had heard and seen of the word of life, that they afterward made known to others. Our Lord Himself had lived His religion in all its fullness and power long years before it was given to the world through the creeds and confessions of the Christian Church or even written down in the New Testament. Indeed, as far as we know, He did not write a single line of His own discourse, nor were any of His teachings preserved in writing during His lifetime. "According to the historical view, Christianity was life before it became doctrine. In Jesus Christ men are brought into personal fellowship with spiritual and eternal realities. The resultant knowledge furnishes material for literature and dogma. The New

Testament writings are the earliest literary products embodying the religious experience of Christ and the apostles. The creeds and confessions are attempts to state in brief, systematic form the essential contents of the Christian faith."[1]

Religion, therefore, as a spiritual experience, a state of the heart, preceded theology as a thing of the intellect, an exercise of the reason. Christianity did not come as a speculation about God and salvation, but as a discipline and testimony. We have seen that Jesus did not cast religion into intellectual forms, but exhibited it as an inner state of being. Our Lord was no theologian or teacher of philosophy, but the supreme Master in the realm of ethics and religion. He formulated no theory, gave the world no creed, elaborated no system of doctrine, but moved constantly in the sphere of the spirit, which was His true domain. His gospel was not the result of speculation, but was the embodiment of His own inner experience. What He laid stress on was not the metaphysics of religion, but character and fellowship with God. From the beginning His religion was a life, a spiritual power within the soul. The subject of His teaching was conduct, duty,

practical morality, love to God, love to man. Religion for Christ was a sense of glad surrender to the will of God, of confident trust in and blessed communion with the heavenly Father, of self-renouncing love to humankind. "What He taught," says Robert Louis Stevenson, "was not a code of rules, but a loving spirit; not truths, but a spirit of truth; not views, but a view." Peabody asserts that "the beginnings of Christian discipleship are not in knowledge about Christ, or in feelings concerning Christ, but in obedience, loyalty, the dedication of the will, the following of Christ." Harnack declares that "the gospel is no theoretical system of doctrine or philosophy of the universe. It is a glad message assuring us of life eternal, and telling us what the things and the forces with which we have to do are worth. By treating of life eternal it teaches us how to lead our lives aright. It tells us of the value of the human soul, of humility, of mercy, of purity, of the cross and the worthlessness of worldly goods and anxiety for the things of which earthly life consists. And it gives the assurance that, in spite of every struggle, peace, certainty, and something within that can never be destroyed will be the crown of

a life rightly led.''[2] The contribution of Jesus, therefore, to the life of mankind was the begetting within the individual a spirit, a disposition, a type of mind which realizes itself in virtuous conduct and righteous endeavor. Religion to Christ was a way of life.

The theme of Jesus was religion; He has made known as no one else has done the way of the soul's approach to God. He came to reveal the Father's love and to attract men to a life of communion with Him. His purpose was to show men the beauty of the divine character and to win them to holy living. His mission to the world was to prove the supremacy of righteousness, faith, and love, and to put His stamp of approval upon a life of trust in God. He bore witness to the blessedness of a life completely surrendered to the divine authority and will. The living truths that fell from His lips and around which His teaching centered were those concerning the presence of God, His beneficent care of His children, the kingdom of heaven, a loving Redeemer, the pardon of sin, the regeneration of the soul, an indwelling Spirit, and the life everlasting. These were the lofty thoughts and themes of Jesus, and on them He has

said the last word. And here "the appeal is made direct to the heart. Its language is composed from the alphabet of experience. Its logic is the knowledge of common men."

To be sure, the truths from which have been formulated the doctrines of the Christian Church are to be found in the teachings of Jesus Christ. The words of our Lord exhibit an extraordinary quality of intellectual elevation and insight and constitute the chief source from which has been gathered the material which has been unified in system and creed. The deep sayings of Jesus have furnished the subject-matter of the theological constructions of the centuries. The great seed thoughts left by Christ, revealing His mind and will, have ever since been prolific in theologies and intellectual systems, thus uniting practice with theory, and in action fulfilling the ideal. One writer tells us that while Christ did ask, first of all, with intensity of insistence, for personal love, personal loyalty and devotion, at the same time, He founded a Church, left it a body of truth to teach, and gave it sacraments and a new and pure worship. He did all this that there might be provided a means of approach to Him, so that we might better know Him and

love Him and follow Him. It will consequently be seen that it was inevitable that the facts of the gospel and the content of the Christian consciousness should have found expression in credal form. That a science of theology should have been created out of the realities of the Christian faith was a thing of absolute necessity. The human mind finds no rest until it contemplates the thought of God and enters into a rational appreciation of His ways to man.

It therefore appears that while the Christian religion on its affectional side is the life of God in the soul, on its theoretical side it is an interpretation of religious experience and Christian teaching. And the science of religion must be rightly developed and given a rightful place in the life if the Christian faith is to become complete and full-orbed. Christian doctrine is not merely a permissible but an essential element of religion. Indeed, a theology is absolutely necessary. So long as we are rational beings we must reflect on our experience, analyze it, and seek to make it intelligible. The human mind cannot rest in the inchoate and chaotic; it sorts and arranges impressions and ideas, introduces order into them, and brings system out of the

shapeless mass. Thus religion as a life cannot be divorced from religion as a doctrine; the work of the intellect must be joined with the experience of the heart. Christianity insists on a union of faith and intelligence. If the Christian religion is to commend itself to the world, it must be expressed in clear and definite thought as well as realized in righteous living. The Christian Church must through its loftiest thinkers interpret the essential facts of the gospel and show the reasonableness of their claims. While it is true that men are saved from sin by self-surrender to the life-giving Saviour, it is also true that the view they hold concerning the nature and means of salvation determines to no small extent the practical results of their faith. While the possession of the spirit of Christ is the essence of the Christian religion, correct thought concerning the content of Christian experience is of incalculable value in deepening the inner life and in directing the development of moral conduct. Indeed, the spiritual life grows in richness and depth in proportion to its intelligibleness and the perception that we have of its meaning.

This, however, has not always been kept in mind. Indeed, there are many who hold

that theology, instead of being an essential element in religion and an aid to the proper development of religious faith, is a detriment and a snare. During the past half century theology has suffered a depreciation and has fallen into disfavor with large numbers of Christians. There is a distrust on all sides of the creeds and doctrines of the Church. In religion there seems to be lacking a proper appreciation of the great empire of thought in which a systematic unity is given to the teachings of Scripture and the facts of Christian experience. Creeds and dogmas are regarded as matters of abstraction which are wholly unsuited to a common-sense and practical age. Theology, instead of resting on substantial facts, is declared to be a piece of speculation possessing no value for the development or guidance of the spiritual life. Religion is an affair of the emotion and the will and not a thing to be mastered and systematized by the reason. "I love," says one, "flowers and religion; I hate botany and theology." What the world needs, we are told, is not doctrine but practical teachings and social service. The man on the street tells you that he does not care about theologies and creeds but character and conduct.

It is the Sermon on the Mount, and not the creeds of the ecumenical councils, in which he is particularly interested. Theology thus has lost its place of honor as the greatest of the sciences and has been relegated to the musty and distant past. Indeed, among not a few clergymen dogmatics has lost its interest and a philosophy of religion is looked upon as no longer necessary. Stuckenberg tells us that a certain clergyman who had a good reputation as a theologian proposed that a bonfire be made of works on theology and criticism, and that the proposal was loudly applauded by an audience composed largely of theologians.

Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, in an article on the "Use and Abuse of Creeds," depicts the attitude of the modern world to creeds as follows: "As everybody knows, they are everywhere spoken against, sometimes mildly and sometimes with great wrath. The non-churchgoing world has no use for creeds. They are abominations and superstitions to be trampled under foot. Essayists and novelists sneer at the creeds or smile blandly at the poor souls who still take an interest in them. Many scientists and philosophers cannot write on any subject whatsoever with-

out getting in a thrust at the creeds. Even professing Christians have been known to speak disdainfully of them, and religious leaders have again and again advocated the heroic measure of putting all the creeds into the fire. Many persons do not deem them worthy even of contempt. They pass them by with lofty-browed indifference.

> 'I take possession of man's mind and deed,
> I care not what the sects may brawl,
> I sit as God holding no form of creed,
> But contemplating all!'

That is the spirit of the modern world."[3]

Principal Forsyth, in The Cruciality of the Cross, indicts the modern age with still greater severity. "No religion," he says, "can survive which does not know where it is, and current religion does not know where it is, and it hates to be made to ask. It hates theology. Religion has become too æsthetic, too exclusively sympathetic, too bland, too naturalistic. And all the time the Church is dropping into a vague Arianism; it is losing faith in the incarnation, in the real presence of the redeeming God, and therefore faith in a strenuous and historic ethic."[4] While this indictment of the spirit of the age by the scholarly writer is doubtless severe, yet we

think it finds much to justify it both in the present situation and in the prospect lying before us. The lack of an adequate understanding and intelligent appreciation of the Christian religion as a scheme for the redemption of a ruined race gives rise to an outlook that is not very hopeful. The deep-rooted and sometimes bitter prejudice of the great mass of non-churchgoers against the intellectual formulations of the Christian faith creates a condition that is by no means reassuring to those who feel that Christianity can accomplish no large and permanent good in the earth unless it receives the sanction of the head as well as the allegiance of the heart. And what is even worse is that not a few followers of Christ and members of His Church look upon theology as an antiquated and debilitating science that is no longer worthy of their loyalty and respect.

Now, this depreciation of the creeds and doctrines of the Christian Church is wholly unwarranted. This prejudice against the mental constructions of religion can in no way be justified. To be sure, the antagonism existing between theology and the religious life is a problem to be accounted for. It arose not without a cause. This prejudice is, we

think, largely a reaction against an extreme intellectual formulation of the Christian faith and an excessive emphasis on theology. It is for the most part a revolt against the dogmatism and intellectualism of an age that happily is passing. During many of the centuries past the heart and essence of true religion, the presence of God within the soul, was overlaid with credal statements and theological confessions. For long periods moral surrender to Christ was less insisted on than conformity to some particular way of thinking. The ultimate values of the gospel were found not in an inner state of being and personal conduct, but in the acceptance of certain doctrinal systems. The essence of Christianity which Christ summed up in the twofold law of love was overshadowed by great doctrines concerning the Trinity, the nature and person of Jesus, sin and salvation. So all-powerful was the logic of doctrine in the determining of Christian thought and experience that one writer says, "It is doubtless within the bounds of truth to declare that in the ages faced by Wiclif and Luther the philosophy of Christian interpretation as inherited from the Fathers wielded a more direct and far greater influence upon

the thought of the Christian world than did the combined teachings of Christ and his apostles. Christ and the writers of the New Testament, indeed, were largely lost in the maze of patristic allegory."[5]

But while doctrines and creeds have been abused and have often been a stone of stumbling rather than a way of approach to God, they must not, therefore, be discarded as something no longer necessary. While they have been unwisely exalted above the life of the soul and personal character, and have repelled many from the altars of the Church who otherwise would have been attracted thereto, they must not be cast out as mischievous and useless. That they have failed to give adequate expression to the life of faith in God and to the living facts of the gospel is no argument that they are superfluous and should be abandoned. We must follow here the law that guides us in all other fields of action. As is well known, the philosophies and sciences of the past have not been complete and adequate interpretations of the facts that they have sought to explain. Indeed, many of the scientific and philosophical theories that have been formulated at the cost of much labor and pain have been shown

to be defective. Must we then abandon all efforts at a unified and systematic knowledge in the fields of philosophy and science? To do so would be folly. The same holds true of theology. There should be no disposition to get rid of the intellectual constructions of Christianity, but, rather, a desire to modify and restate them so that they may more completely gather up and express the content of the Christian consciousness and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Thus, while Christianity is not a metaphysic, but a life, yet it involves a metaphysic, and must be related to life in its manifold forms. The Christian faith has, as we have already seen, a twofold expression, and any attempt to separate them cannot be otherwise than harmful in its results; their rightful relation must be understood and explained. The primal instincts of the heart and the deep intuitions of the soul, which are the controlling forces in religion, must be rightly interpreted. The profound utterances of the New Testament and the spiritual life reflected therein must be studied and set forth in a real and living way. Religion unapproved and uncontrolled by rational processes degenerates into sentiment and superstition and

fails to adapt itself to the feelings and practical necessities of the age. Indeed, Sabatier affirms that "a religion without doctrine, a piety without thought, a sentiment without expression, are things essentially contradictory." It will therefore be seen that religion is not an incoherent and amorphous mass of sentiments and convictions, but an experience which has a definite and ascertainable content which may be stated in terms suited to the degree of spiritual culture and knowledge with which it is accompanied. Underlying religious phenomena there is a true law which, when discovered and formulated, leads to a fuller appreciation of the Christian faith in its many-sided relations. As in the various fields of science we recognize the advantage of clear notions and methodized knowledge, so in the field of religion we also recognize the immense gain arising from the crystallization and expression of the inner life in well-defined concepts. The aim of theology thus is not to create religion, but to understand it. As the aim of geology is to study the strata of the earth, to show the agencies that formed them, and to put down in an orderly manner the things learned, so the aim of doctrine and creed is to master and systematize the facts

of spiritual experience and present them in a consistent whole. Its office is to unfold the truth that Christ has brought to men and to interpret the religious life of Christian believers. Its work is to show that the inner life is an organic and connected whole.

Moreover, had the Christian religion not been given thoughtful and unified expression, it would have lost its influence over the hearts of men and failed to make for itself a permanent place in the earth. Had it not been hardened into concrete and definite forms by the processes of thought, it, like a dream which delights the slumbers of the night only to vanish with the coming day, would have passed away with the time and mood that gave it birth. A religion which fails to challenge the reason or make an appeal to thought is one which cannot long exist. Were religion to disassociate itself from rational processes, it would move wholly in the realm of mythical fancies and legends which may do well for a season, but which would finally be dissolved before the complexity and progress of a growing knowledge. Only as the reason enters the domain of faith to give it meaning and fixity can faith become a stable and abiding thing. Indeed,

it may not be too much to say that those religious convictions which the intellect finds the most stubborn to interpret may be the ones which possess the greatest significance for the spiritual life. The truth which most readily promotes spiritual culture is not that which is gained by the least mental exertion, but that which is the result of a vigorous exercise of the mind. A religion, therefore, which makes no appeal to the rational nature of man, and contains no elements to be explained, cannot long interest the imagination or bring satisfaction to the heart.

It must, however, be borne in mind that while theology forms a vital and necessary expression of religion, no particular system of thought must be regarded as final and complete. The idea has gotten abroad in some quarters that the doctrinal systems of the Church are the last and best word in theology and must not in any way be revised or changed. There is a widespread impression that the creeds and dogmas of Christianity are based on a closed revelation and that nothing should be added to or taken from them. This is a mistaken and mischievous notion. Theology is not a closed but a progressive science. With each generation new

definitions must be made and restatements given of the great realities of religion. No system of doctrine will answer all the centuries. As the horizons of knowledge are enlarged the old creeds must be recast and baptized into newness. The interpretation of Christianity prevailing at any particular age must correspond to the viewpoint and perspective of that period. Each generation must give in its own concepts and in its own language its own explanation of spiritual facts. Formulas and creeds, though hoary with age and hallowed by the sanction of the Church, which no longer worthily express the living hopes and convictions of the present day must be given up. We must return to the teachings of Jesus and His apostles and interpret them in accordance with the spiritual culture and best thought of the present time. One writer says, "Each generation, if it is alive and growing, must make for itself new thought forms for the expression of this eternal religious impulse, must translate its religious experience into terms of its own thought and life, must adopt new methods and higher ideals for the application of the principles of religion to the needs and problems it confronts." Dr. Van Dyke asserts that

"The Church must realize anew the precious value of the truths that Christ has given her. She must not conceal them or cast them away; she must bring them into the light, press them home upon the minds and hearts of men. She must simplify her statement of them so that men may understand what they mean. She must not be content with repeating them in the language of past centuries. She must translate them into the language of to-day."

It may be pointed out that change and growth are characteristic not only of theology but also of every field of human knowledge. As an example of this truth attention may be called to the physical sciences, which are not stationary, but which are changing and advancing. A science that is at a standstill is no longer living but dead. Many of the scientific theories of a generation ago have become obsolete; those theories which no longer interpret the living facts are discarded and thrown aside. Indeed, the whole course of science is strewn with the wreckage of theories which were once firmly believed, but which are now abandoned, as they are seen to be inadequate interpretations of the facts they sought to unify. With the passing of every decade new books in every realm of

knowledge have to be written in order to gather up and interpret the new data that are constantly coming to light. Professor Drummond tells us that the librarian of the University of Edinburgh, desiring to remove from the library the books that were out of date in order to make room for certain new books, requested Professor Simpson to go to the library and pick out the books on his subject that were no longer needed. Simpson replied, "Take every textbook that is more than ten years old, and put it down in the cellar." Thus old theories in science, as in other departments of knowledge, are being consigned to oblivion and new theories are taking their place. The same is true of theology. The old doctrines are passing away; they are being buried in the graveyard of the past. But while the old dogmas are being discarded, the old experiences and the old truths must find expression in new forms. Religious dogmas, like all other dogmas, must be subjected to the normal processes of scientific thinking, and those which no longer meet the demands of the age must be set aside. New theories must be formulated, not in the thought and language of a by-gone day, but in that of the twentieth century. Theology

must expand and perfect itself in the midst of life. In this way alone can the Christian faith thrive and prosper. Rudolf Eucken in a passage of great clearness and force says: "Whatever is antiquated, outgrown, and no longer useful we must be willing to surrender as no longer of significance and value to our day and generation, as, perhaps, a positive harm to it. These older systems of thought and conceptions of religious truth once had their validity and importance, and are to be respected, even revered; but the picture of nature has become so enlarged, our insight into causal relations so deepened, our interpretation of universal law and order, our understanding of historical and critical processes so extended, that we can no longer hold absolutely to the older philosophies and doctrines. Much in the old systems that was once held to be absolute truth is now felt to be only a symbol. The latter conception of it is the chief excuse for its retention on our part. But it will be still better if we openly and frankly disavow it, and not wait until our opponents compel us to do so. It is our duty as Protestants earnestly, reverently, to revise our traditional beliefs, that religion itself may live. Deprived of these husks of outgrown

dogma, the essential kernel of religion will not die, but only be purified and released for new germination and increase."[6]

Moreover, the revelation given of the character and will of God is not a closed revelation but continuous and progressive. With every succeeding age the Christian Church is coming into a larger appreciation of the divine nature and of the truths of the Holy Scriptures. While the Bible has shed a wondrous light upon the pathway of mankind, its full light has not yet shone into the hearts of men. Notwithstanding the vast spiritual treasures that it has yielded in the past, it still contains stores of wealth waiting to be uncovered by the seeking soul. The Christian Church as never before is seeing God in Christ and is learning larger lessons of His eternal goodness and love. The truth of the universal Fatherhood of God, obscured by the theological conceptions of the Middle Ages, has in these latter days been rediscovered and has led to a renaissance of faith. The Church has also entered into a fuller appreciation of the spirit and life of Jesus, and believers are growing in grace and in a knowledge of their Lord and Saviour. And the future will outshine the present as the

present outshines the past. New visions of God and new appreciations of Jesus Christ will be given with the gathering years. Knowledge of God and things divine, instead of being completely mastered and unified, will grow from more to more.

What is true concerning the revelation of God given in the Holy Scriptures is also true concerning the revelation which is constantly being given of Him in the physical universe. With every new truth gathered from our study of the objective world there is linked a deeper knowledge of the divine nature and of the divine purposes in the earth. Science has not only given us a roomier universe but a larger and nobler conception of its Maker. As Kepler in his study of the heavens gained new insight into the ways of God, so a wider acquaintance with physical nature opens to our view more perfect wisdom and greater power. The law and order everywhere present throughout the universe, the countless beauties of the organic world, the wonders and mysteries of the microscopic realm with which our own age has particularly made us familiar, heighten our admiration and awe of the Creator. And in the book of nature there still remain numerous leaves that are unread.

God's revelation in the objective universe, equally with His revelation in history and in the life of man, has not been fully apprehended. Theology thus must enrich itself by the entire wealth of human intellectual achievement. It must draw its data from all sources. It must gather them not only from the Sacred Scriptures, but from science, philosophy, literature, history—indeed, from every source that possesses value for life. Here, then, is material for new interpretations of spiritual realities; here is work for the man of spiritual insight and vision. And the larger conceptions of God and man that arise with a more complete study of the world and human life call for a restatement of our beliefs that shall be an adequate correlate of spiritual truth. The fuller appreciation of the divine character and will which a more thorough investigation of the Bible, human history, and the physical order gives, must be accompanied by a worthier doctrine of God and His ways among men. And the full benefit of the new insight into the Holy Scriptures and the new discoveries in the physical sciences can be gathered only as our systems of doctrine correspond with the clearer vision and the more complete knowledge.

But while the theories and deductions derived from the facts of the Christian revelation are constantly in process of change, the Christian religion on its affectional side is unchangeable. The hunger and thirst for righteousness which constitute the very heart of religion are the same in all ages and climes. Like the stars which always abide, though the theories about them are shifting, so the realities of the spiritual life are the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. While every generation needs a new interpretation of the facts of the old religion in its own concepts and language, it needs no new religion. The "old-time religion" is as good in one age as it is in another. Christian experience is the same for men and women of the twentieth century as it was for those of the first. Underlying the creeds and outliving them is the indestructible love born of God in the heart, the life that was in the Divine Son, and the enduring graces of the Spirit. In the midst of a changing theology the devout soul may find its fullness in Christ, and abiding in His presence may grow up into Him its living Head. "The essentials of real religion can never change. There is always the same God to believe in and trust; the same Christ to

confess and follow; the same Holy Spirit to receive for inspiration and sanctification; the same Bible to read, love, and obey; the same homely code of duty to regard and practice; the same injunction of love to God and neighbor to observe; the same obligation of prayer, self-denial, philanthropy, and humanitarianism; the same glorious gospel to listen to and rejoice in; the same heaven and immortality in the future.'"[7]

It must, however, not be overlooked that while theology seeks to understand and interpret the realities of religion, it is unable to express fully the facts of the inner life. The most adequate doctrinal statement of the content of Christian consciousness and the teachings of our Lord can never be final, but only partially complete. Spiritual experience is richer and deeper than the theories which seek to explain it. The workings of the Divine Spirit in the heart are so subtle that ofttimes they elude the skill of the theologian; the laws which regulate the communion of the soul with God are incapable of precise and exact expression. There are depths of the spiritual life which no creed can fully measure or formula tabulate. It is as impossible to set forth in complete credal form the pro-

found convictions which root in the spiritual life as it is to press the beauty and fragrance of the flower within the limits of botany. Like some deep ocean that has never been reached by the sounding lead, there are depths to the life within which lie beyond the reach of a credal test. "So rich is character in content, and so complex is spiritual life, that we can never, by means of reflection, lift into clear consciousness all the elements that enter into them."

It will thus be seen that theology possesses no finality. As the content of spiritual experience is constantly growing, theology itself is subject to change. Each theologian may contribute something to the solution of religious problems, but he can cherish no hope of producing a final system. Moreover, it cannot be expected that each generation will be engaged with the same religious questions or that it will emphasize the same aspects of the Christian life. The moral and spiritual forces that mold each age continually vary and thus bring about a constant shift in the treatment of theological themes. What we must do, however, in the midst of the changing facts of experience, the enlarging conceptions of God and man, and the

increasing presence of Christ in the world, is to interpret the living realities of the Christian life in terms that all can understand. What we must strive for is to set forth the spiritual experiences and achievements of the twentieth century not in the symbols and creeds of a by-gone day, but in those of our own age.

CHAPTER II

A DYNAMIC GOSPEL

The gospel is supernatural in its origin; it has its source in the heart of the Eternal. It is not a human invention, but the self-revelation of God; it is a divine plan for the redemption of humanity. It is not a philosophy of man, but a divine scheme for the saving of a ruined race. Jesus taught that He came to earth to reveal the Father's love and to make known the glad tidings of salvation. Christ brought to the world a divine message. The supernatural source of His gospel is attested in the words: "This commandment have I received of my Father." The apostle Paul also declared that the truth he proclaimed had a divine source. The gospel he preached was not taught him by man, but was revealed to him from heaven. "It pleased God," he says, "to reveal His Son in me." He designated himself "an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by

Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead."

This does not mean that the gospel is devoid of a human element or that man had no part in its production. It does not imply that the gospel is something foreign to the life of the race, coming into it from without. No! It has a human as well as a divine side; it is of man as well as of God. It was revealed through the human soul and mediated by man's thought. The human mind was the medium through which it was conveyed to the world. It came up out of the deep recesses of the heart. If it is divine in its origin, it is human in its expression. If it came from God, it was given to mankind through the vision of the prophet, the message of the apostle, and the life of Jesus. And the gospel has been colored by the thought and personality of every writer who has helped to give it birth. The warmth of the human heart is upon it and the spirit of man breathes through it. It bears the impress of the channel through which it reached the world.

The gospel has been characterized as a gospel of power; its distinguishing mark is its life-giving power. The gospel is not a

philosophic theory, nor a compilation of dogmas, nor a mere code of ethics, but a religion of power proceeding from the mind and heart of God. It is the principle of life for all our humanity. It is in the gospel, the good news of salvation, that spiritual power is found. The moral energy by which men are convinced of sin, renewed in heart, and transformed in conduct has its source in the gospel of Christ. To Paul the gospel was a moral and spiritual dynamism. This was the idea that bulked large in his teaching; this was the central thought of his message to men. The term "power," by which he describes the gospel, is one of his key-words. With supreme faith in its ability to redeem from sin and to recreate the soul he exclaims, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

According to the teachings of the New Testament, the source and secret of the power which the gospel contains is found in Christ. The dynamic of the gospel is Jesus. From Him all moral energy proceeds. He Himself declared that, being lifted up, He would draw all men unto Him. He is set forth as the Son of God in power. According to Paul, the

power of the gospel centers chiefly in the message which the cross of Christ proclaims. The wondrous love and self-sacrifice displayed by Jesus in His sufferings and death are the very secret of this life-giving power. The cross of Calvary, which was the culmination of Christ's life of teaching and preaching, helping and healing, soothing and sympathizing, has been as has no other event in His entire career a spiritual force exerting a reconciling and redeeming influence on the world. "We preach," says the apostle, "Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Again he asserts, "The word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." The cross is the greatest moral energy among men, destroying sin and creating righteousness.

The supreme aim of the gospel is to save mankind from sin, turn their faces toward God, and make them glorious citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Its fundamental purpose is to uproot evil, reform character, give men power over temptation, impart new

incentives for living, and fill the soul with sweetness and light. Its high-born mission is to purify society of the passions that consume it, cleanse the human heart of lust and greed, and establish feelings of good will between man and man. It seeks to recover the individual from the moral impotency into which he has fallen, and to bestow upon him a secret power whereby he might live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. It aims to beget in the soul a new-born hope enabling it to rise above the sordidness of earth into the spiritual altitudes of the divine life.

That the gospel has accomplished what its Founder and the writers of the New Testament claimed for it no one will deny. It has in a marvelous manner made good its claims. The recreation of human lives which it has wrought during the centuries past sustains the high confidence placed in it by Jesus and his apostles. It has proven itself to be the power of God unto salvation; it has shown itself to be a divine saving energy among mankind. Its history is a record of wondrous deeds. One writer in speaking of the moral transformation wrought by the gospel during the early centuries of the Christian

era says of it: "It expelled cruelty, it curbed passion, it branded suicide; it punished and suppressed an execrable, yet all but universal infanticide; it drove the naked shamelessness of heathen impurities into a congenial darkness. There was hardly a class whose wrongs it did not remedy. It rescued the gladiator; it freed the slave; it protected the captive; it nursed the sick; it sheltered the orphan; it elevated woman; it shrouded as with a halo of sacred innocence the tender years of childhood."[8] Another writer in recounting the redeeming influences of the gospel says: "The cross of Jesus sent forth a new love among men. Husbands learned to love their wives as Christ loved the Church, appreciatively, sympathetically, tenderly, helpfully. The wife learned to reverence her husband. Parents learned to love their children as God loves his children, mercifully and graciously. Masters learned to look upon slaves and servants as brethren, and so became humane, just, and then so generous as to set them free. Rich men came to see that riches are not for personal pleasure and power, but for stewardship and service, and so came to grow rich by giving. Rulers came to see that authority is for purposes of grace, and to know that

the rule of men, like the rule of God, must be beneficent.''[9]

The transforming power of the gospel upon the pagan world during the early centuries of Christianity may be learned from the letter written by Pliny to Trajan in A. D. 110. In the official report which the proconsul sends to the Roman emperor he bears witness that the Christians residing in his province met before it was light to break bread, to sing a hymn to Christ as God, to bind themselves by a solemn oath to refrain from fraud, theft, and adultery, to speak the truth, and to deal justly with all men. And these were the men and women who once were vain in their imaginations, darkened in heart, and filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, and wickedness. These had been among those who had sunk to the grossest moral degradation and whose lives were full of iniquity and shame. And the power of the gospel to reform the individual and to heal the distempers of society has not in the least abated. What it was in imperial Rome, in cultured Athens, and among the barbarians of Galatia it still is among the nations of the earth. It curbs passion, subdues pride, chastens fierceness, and purifies the heart as when in the

vigor of its youth it recreated the lives of men. It still checks licentiousness, intemperance, lawlessness, and vice of every form. It still introduces into the social life of humanity a new spirit, transforming it in all its relations.

The triumphs the gospel has won over debased and depraved men are not easily recounted. Men and women who have been a burden to society and a disgrace to humanity have under its influence been changed in character and filled with all holy virtues. Prostitutes and harlots, drunkards and blasphemers, liars and thieves—yea, those who have been cast out as vile—have been touched by its power and made to walk with Christ in heavenly places. The sins which enslave mankind as in a mesh, which bring despair to their hearts and sorrow to their lives, are by the gospel dissolved and chased away. Through its ability to redeem the drunkard is made sober, the cruel kind, the dishonest honest, the liar truthful, and the lustful virtuous. The gospel is a glad evangel, proclaiming light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. As in the days of the apostle those who have been fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, sensualists,

thieves, covetous, revilers, extortioners have by its redeeming power been washed, justified, sanctified. Moreover, by the dynamism of the gospel many a plague spot of vice has been transformed into an earthly paradise. By its purifying influences many a "Murderer's Alley" has been purged of its crime and made a habitation of love and virtue.

One evening as Christopher North was on his way to preach, a stranger came up to him and handing him a letter said, "Here is a letter of great importance; you are requested to read it before you preach." Thinking it was a request for prayer, he opened the letter and found that it contained an account of his sins before he was converted, and asked how so vile a sinner as he was dare to preach the gospel. He entered the pulpit and after the opening exercises were concluded produced the letter and informed the congregation of its contents, adding: "All this is true—a correct picture of what I once was. How wonderful must be the grace that could quicken and raise me up from such a death in trespasses and sins, and could make me a vessel of mercy, one who knows that his sins have been cleansed by the Lamb of God!" His hearers were deeply moved as he related

the change that had been wrought in his life by the blessed gospel, and some were led to receive salvation.

David Brainard, who spent some time as a missionary among the degraded North American Indians preaching to them the good news of salvation, found on returning to a certain place where he had labored a year or two before "that the fruits of righteousness and sobriety and virtue and brotherly love were everywhere visible, though it had been possible to impart to them only the slightest moral or ethical teaching."

Charles Darwin, while on his travels of scientific research, visited, in 1833, Tierra Del Fuego, whose people he described as the most degraded specimens of humanity he had ever seen. He wrote: "The Fuegians are in a more miserable state of barbarism than I ever expected to see any human being." Indeed, so low were they in their intellectual and moral life and so abject their condition that he considered them beyond the reach of civilization. The gospel was afterward introduced among this debased people and in a comparatively short time marvelous transformations were wrought. Darwin visited them again in 1869, and great was his astonishment to find

that they had been transformed into Christian men and women. With willing publicity he declared, "Truly the missionary's message is a magician's wand."

The writer once visited the well-known Water Street Mission in the city of New York, which was founded by Jerry McAuley, the converted gambler, prize fighter, and thief. On the evening of our visit the meeting was in charge of Mr. Hadley, a man who had gone to the very bottom, but who had been rescued from the pit of sin by the grace of Christ. As we sat in the hall and listened to the testimonies of those present on behalf of the power of Christ to save from sin a deep impression was made upon us. It could be seen by the most casual observer that those who now testified of the saving power of the gospel had lived vicious and scurvy lives. Their faces were furrowed deeply with the passions of lust and hate. One after another they told of the infamies to which they had sunk, the dark sins they had done, and the soul torture they had endured. They also told of the clean lives, the glad hearts, the peaceful homes, and the happy hours they had experienced since the grace of Christ had set them free from sin. Those miserable

wrecks of humankind, who seemed to be beyond recovery, had been delivered from horrible vileness and redeemed to virtue and usefulness. Through the power of God their lives were cleansed of drunkenness, bestiality, and lust, and they had become lovers of virtue and truth. Their change seemed absolute and complete; from being base and cruel they now were full of tenderness and love. They, moreover, had become glad evangels of the cross of Christ to the outcast and lost. To the ignorant and imbruted of the slums of New York they went with the glad message of a free and a full salvation. The recital by these men of the wondrous miracles of grace that had been wrought upon them deepened the conviction that the gospel is indeed the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Its inherent ability to redeem from sin, to cleanse the life, and to bring a new hope received a new attestation.

Dr. Wilfred Grenfell, the famous Labrador missionary, in speaking of the moral cures effected by the gospel says: "Just as I have seen the temperature fall and life restored as some course of treatment benefits a dying man, so I have seen the cruel man made kind,

and the drunken man made sober, and the impure man made pure, and the feeble man made strong, and the coward made brave. By union with Christ I have seen men making these tiny homes in Whitechapel and on the Labrador coast that were little better than hells on earth into places where God's love dwelled, where men gave as well as took, where poverty did not make the world look half so blue as riches often do, where tender and peaceful people were enabled to meet crises in life, before which to-day many of us would fail."

On the last Sunday in October, 1914, nearly one thousand Christian men, converts of the William A. Sunday meetings in the cities of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, moved on Philadelphia and conducted services in nearly four hundred of the leading churches of that city, both morning and evening. The Public Ledger in recording this event says, "In simple language these men, many of whom scorned to enter a church six months ago, give remarkable testimony to that change that took place in their lives when they accepted the invitation to 'get right with God.' They told of their redemption from the drink habit and other vices, of reunited families, of men

who for twenty years reviled the Church, suddenly transformed into Christian evangelists, and of card-playing clubs and 'booze joints' changed into prayer meetings and Bible classes." Among this thousand Christian evangelists were bankers, policemen, firemen, letter carriers, railroad employees, carpenters, blacksmiths, office clerks, doctors, lawyers, merchants, ex-bartenders, and representatives of many other occupations.

What other agency can so redeem and regenerate human society? What other power can eradicate drunkenness, cruelty, and lust from human life and introduce moral order and beauty into a disordered world? What else can lift the burden of guilt from the aching heart of mankind? "What else can you take to the drunkard and the thief, the harlot and the wastrel, who lurk at night in the shadows of our streets and squares? What else can you take to the man who remembers not only his sins but his impotence, who knows that he is caught by some habit which depraves his mind and controls his hand against his will?"[10] Can science or art rescue him who has been ruthlessly defeated by temptation and who has taken his place in the ranks of the rabble? Can culture or

education restore the lost virtue to her who in the market place has bartered her soul for gold and whose life has become a cesspool of evil passions? Can any institution of human civilization morally resurrect him whom sin has smitten into ruin and cause him to lift up his head in a new honor and with a new hope?

Now, we are not unaware of the many nostrums that have been advocated by the doctors of humanity for the healing of the disease of sin. The reformers of the centuries have proposed numerous measures for the abolition of evil and the deliverance of man from its thrall. Science, art, literature, government, and law have been heralded as agencies that possess the power to redeem the world. It has been declared that wise and just legislation can eliminate the curse of sin with all its attendant pains. Sociologists proclaim that social reconstruction possesses the ability to recreate humanity. What we need is not a new birth from above, but good surroundings, material plenty, normal social and industrial conditions. With the introduction of shorter hours of labor, bigger wages, better homes, the kingdom of God will appear. The millennium will

be brought in when man secures for himself the full enjoyment of his economic and social rights. One writer would reclaim the dwellers in the slums by pulling down the unsanitary tenements and rehousing the dwellers in decency and comfort. "One would heal the world's sickness through the medium of political reform, another through social readjustment, another through the organization of the relations of capital and labor, another through the development of State responsibility in respect of the poor, the aged, and the infirm." Thus we are told that ethics and religion are the corollary of the prevailing social system. As economic and industrial conditions are improved religion and morality are transformed. A healthy social life creates circumstances from which emerges a new moral and spiritual capacity. When men and women are better fed and housed and clad they become better in character.

Now, it cannot be denied that many of the institutions and movements of society are beneficent agencies and serve deep-felt needs of human life. Under their influence not a little of human pain and suffering has been dissolved and chased away. A wholesome

environment is conducive both to a healthier physical existence and a larger intellectual improvement. Art and literature not only elevate and refine, but preserve those emotions and solaces which cheer life and make it kindlier and more comprehensible. Higher wages and better homes not only lift the minds of men from the harshness of their tasks, but widen the field of action and opportunity. Law and government set in operation forces that make for man's material and social well-being. Indeed, such agencies as science and culture, when rightly used, may be made the handmaid of the Christian religion in its task of realizing the life of Christ among mankind. And the Christian Church cannot remain indifferent to those remedial forces whose office it is to make impossible the foul surroundings and sodden atmosphere that poison and brutalize life. The Christian ministry, while it exalts the life of the soul above meat and raiment, must uphold those institutions that seek to eliminate want and poverty, ignorance and disease from human lives. Indeed, all good men and women must work together to make the dwelling places of men brighter, cleaner, healthier, and gladder.

Human agencies, indispensable as they are to the well-being of society, are, however, unable to cleanse the soul of sin and cause it to go forth exulting in a new joy. The remedies of man, however efficient in eliminating suffering and alleviating the pain of our distressed humanity, are utterly powerless to work miracles of moral healing. "Where is the evidence that science has regenerated one soul, or that culture has redeemed one libertine from his lust or taken envy or malice or pride or jealousy or greed out of any heart?" Sin is too deadly and too deep to be uprooted and destroyed by man's power. All attempts made to redeem mankind by philosophy, science, or art must end in dismal failure. The advance of civilization instead of exorcising sin changes its forms and enables it to manifest itself in more subtle and complex ways. No human invention is able to bring relief to those whose hearts are full of evil passions and whose lives are contemptible and vile. The state whose institutions are corrupted, and whose progress is retarded by the hordes of evil people who cling to its heels, can find no permanent relief in human schemes and devices. No legislation can lift the drunkard and the harlot, the

gambler and the thief, out of the mire into which they have fallen, endow them with virtue, and establish them in the ways of righteousness. Government and law may improve social conditions, punish crime, better house the poor, but they are absolutely impotent to liberate men from the evil habits that enslave them and fill them with the life of God. Thus human society, with all its science, culture, and art, needs as the means of its redemption the regenerative power of the gospel of Christ. The dynamism of the cross alone can lift the burden of guilt from the heart and conscience of man and bring him into a vital union with the Divine life. The saving power and radiant presence of the Son of God alone can put an end to the world's disorder, misery, and sin.

Voltaire, after surveying the most brilliant epochs of the world's history—the golden age of Greece, of Rome, of Florence, of France—resplendent with great names, poets and architects, philosophers and statesmen, artists and scientists, turned away with the sad reflection that all ages demonstrate the inherent wickedness of the human heart and the impotency of man to save himself. The one thing that can abolish evil and put men

right with God is the incoming of a new life. The one power that can rescue mankind from the abyss of sin and death is the redeeming hand of God.

Dr. Jowett, in a noble and gracious sermon preached in the city of New York, calls attention to the fact that the essential and unique power of the gospel lies in its ability to transform human nature. He asserts, moreover, that the gospel is the only thing that can redeem a crushed and broken humanity and fill it with capacity and life. "The Church of Christ," he says, "has to do what nobody else can do. It is original. It has no competitors. What is there in New York trying to make people over again? That is what Christ does; He makes people over again. Christ never once gave alms, not once, not once in all His ministry. He gave life. He gave capacity. He made people over again. Charity is the lesser gift. Jesus was never an almsgiver; He was a lifegiver. He never tinkered with humanity. He did not give money to the cripple and leave him a cripple; He gave him capacity to use his limbs. Society can give charity; it is only religion that can give capacity. Religion gets rid of heredity; it bestows a new parent, a new

ancestry, a new womb. Have you inherited a temperament like an east wind, or are you corrupt and weak and feeble, or has prosperity destroyed you, adversity crushed you, even as the extremes of heat and cold can destroy?—it does not matter; here is a power that can make you over again. The Church's distinction is this; it is a ministry that confers capacity. Christianity gives life, restores life, makes life; and it gives to life the power to develop and advance in the only region where there is eternal progress and everlasting consummation.'"[11]

Several things remain to be said. It remains to be pointed out that the moral transformations wrought by the gospel furnish the most conclusive proof of its divinity. Its fruit and victories, the men and women who have been won to greatness of character and service, constitute an indisputable presumption of its divine authorship and nature. While other arguments are not to be despised, the multitudes liberated from vice to lives of truth and purity are the best apology for the gospel. The gospel finds its chief support in the cleansed hearts and the sanctified lives of those who have come under its influence. Emerson somewhere observes that the truest

test of civilization is not the census, nor the size of cities, nor the crops, but the kind of man the country turns out. So with the gospel. Its real test lies in the type of character it produces. Like the various agencies and institutions of society, the gospel must be judged by what it accomplishes. And, estimated by what it has done, judged by the moral changes it has wrought in the earth and the beneficent and permanent results it has achieved in every sphere of human action, it must be pronounced to be the power of God unto salvation. Christianity is in its essence, as Eucken asserts, the truest type of religion, because of the many religious faiths it can do the most for life. Thus the test that Jesus applied to His own claim to Messiahship is the test to be applied to His gospel. "Tell them what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached."

At the close of a lecture delivered by a woman in a town in the north of England against the reality of the Christian religion a man in the audience arose and said: "Men, you know me. Twenty-five years ago I was

a poor, miserable drunkard. I used to beat my wife, and I turned my home into a hell. It wasn't me; it was the drink that did it; but I couldn't let it alone. Then there came along a missionary preaching to us about Jesus Christ, how, if we would pray to Him and try to love and follow Him, He would help us to overcome temptation. Men, you know me. For twenty-five years I have been trying to be a good man. My home is happy now, there isn't a happier woman in this whole town than my wife, and it's all because I have been trying to serve Him. Well, now, the lady tells us that Jesus is a myth. I don't know what a myth is, but I suppose she means there never was such a person. But there are some things I don't understand which I wish the lady would explain. If there isn't any Jesus Christ, I wish the lady would explain me.'"[12] Of course she could not explain *him*. The gospel of Christ alone in its ability to redeem the sinner from the horrible pit of sin and bring to him a new manhood can explain such a man. And such a man is an irrefragable proof of the lofty origin and nature of the gospel that Christ brought to the world. The final proof of the divinity of Christianity is a Christian.

Moreover, the living energy and dynamism of the gospel puts the religion of Christ in a class peculiar to itself. The gospel as a religion of power differs from all other religions. It is this great law of power and life, as Drummond observes, which places the gospel upon a footing that is absolutely unique. Other religions stimulate and teach, but the gospel does more—it imparts a moral and spiritual energy to human hearts. Other systems contain truth, but the gospel contains more than truth—it is power. The founders of other religious faiths possessed insight into things ethical, but Jesus, the author of the gospel, not only knew intimately the entire ethical and spiritual realm, but was able to awaken men from their moral impotency and cause them to be vibrant with life. It is in this that the distinction of the gospel lies. The gospel is more than morality, it is more than truth, it is, as we have seen, a great moral and spiritual force creating character and uniting men to God. It is and will forever be the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

CHAPTER III

THE MEANING OF THE CROSS

The cross of Christ occupies a central place in the Gospels of the New Testament. The evangelists have devoted more space to the record of Christ's death than to any other event of His earthly career. Were the teachings of Jesus and the events of His life described with such detail as is the story of the cross, instead of the brief and fragmentary record that has been left us, we would have a biography of large dimensions. Moreover, in addition to the facts that center around the crucifixion the evangelists relate not a few sayings which Jesus uttered during His public ministry concerning His own death. According to the writers of the Gospels, the idea of the cross was ever before the mind of our Lord. Ever and anon He declared that the Son of man would be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, who would condemn Him to death and crucify Him. Ever and anon He spoke of the uplifted

cross which was constantly before His gaze. One writer asserts that the shadow of the cross "fell on Jesus almost from the beginning of his ministry; with increasing definiteness and fullness He spoke to His disciples of the coming tragedy; about one third of the whole amount of matter in the four Gospels is devoted to the events connected with His crucifixion; and after His ascension, while His life almost drops out of sight, His death, together with His resurrection, blazes up into the supreme luminous fact of the gospel."[13] When we turn to the Epistles we find that the same thing is true of them as of the Gospels. The sufferings and death of Jesus seem to have burned themselves into the very consciousness of His apostles. Their letters and epistles are saturated with the pathos of the cross. Calvary is ever in view. While the facts of His life are passed over in almost complete silence, His crucifixion receives special mention and stands out as the central event in His career. To them the cross was the focus which gathered up the converging rays which had shone with effulgence and splendor in the life of Him who declared that He was the light of the world.

Now, this can be understood only as we

assume that the writers of the New Testament looked upon the death of Jesus as an incident possessing special significance. Whatever interpretation we may give of the cross of Christ, it is clear that His disciples were profoundly moved by the crucifixion of our Lord and saw in it an event of more than ordinary meaning. Jesus to them was not merely a friend, a teacher, a leader, but the loving Redeemer, who had come to give Himself for men. He was the Son of God, who had come to die for the sins of the world. His sufferings and death were the utmost expression of the divine love and the hope of man's redemption. Their interpretation of Calvary and the message they proclaimed to others was that Christ had laid down His life to save a sinful race.

The aim of this essay is twofold. First, we purpose to examine briefly the principal theories of the atonement which have been formulated by the theologians of the Christian Church, and determine, if possible, their agreement or disagreement with the plain teachings of Scripture and with the fundamental postulates of the Christian conscience. In the second place, we wish to give a clear statement of the meaning of the cross in the

light of our fullest appreciation of the New Testament and of the best Christian thought. While this is no easy task, we nevertheless hope to clear up a few of the misconceptions which have infested the minds of men and which have produced confusion concerning the significance of the atoning work of Christ. Should we succeed in any measure in bringing into prominent relief the factors that give to Christ's death the value it possesses in the redemption of a ruined race, we shall have our reward.

For nearly a thousand years the death of Jesus was represented as a ransom to Satan, in order that mankind, whom he held captive, should be released from his power. Man by his disobedience had fallen under the dominion of the Evil One and could be liberated only by the payment of a ransom. It was supposed that if God were to wrest mankind by force from Satan's power, there would arise a just ground of complaint on the part of the latter, as the race of men was his rightful possession. According to Origen, the soul of Christ was the price that the devil demanded as the ransom for the liberation of humanity over whom he held sway. Satan, however, made a fool's bargain, for in accept-

ing Christ in lieu of mankind he discovered that he was unable to endure the presence of His sinless soul. Satan thus lost both his captives and the ransom which he had accepted in their stead.

No further statement of this theory is necessary. And a criticism of it is, we think, wholly gratuitous. Its mere statement is its own refutation. The notion is monstrous that God is under obligation to recognize any claims of the devil. To set it aside it is enough to say, with Abelard, that Satan has no more claim to mankind than one has to a slave whom he has induced to run away from his rightful master and whom he holds in possession. Man belongs not to Satan, but to God, and finds in Him his life and his redemption.

It is true, however, that the Scriptures teach that Christ died to redeem men, but the redemption spoken of is not from the dominion of Satan, but from the power of evil. Christ is indeed the Redeemer of His people, but He redeems them from the curse of the law, the slavery of sin. Our Lord laid down His life as a ransom for the race, but the price that He paid was to set men free from the evil habits that enslave them and make

them free sons of God. Men are indeed bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ, but the deliverance wrought out is from the sense of guilt into a life of power and love. Christ thus becomes in a large and glorious manner the Redeemer of the world.

Toward the close of the eleventh century Anselm, a thinker of more than ordinary intellectual acumen, brought forth a theory of the atonement which not only disposed of the view that Christ had paid a ransom to Satan to rescue humanity from his power, but which for long years captivated the thought of the Christian Church. Indeed, this theory is still held by large numbers of Christian believers. According to Anselm, man by his sin has offended the honor of God. By his wrongdoing he has insulted God's dignity and robbed Him of His rights. Sin is an enormous affront, a shocking insult to the Divine Majesty. Now, for this dishonor and act of robbery recompense must be made. The character of God is such that it is wholly impossible for Him to pardon sin until a full satisfaction has been given to Him in the form of the vindication of His honor. But such a satisfaction by man is altogether out of the question, since he is finite and the

enormity of his guilt practically infinite. Could the individual bring to God the entire universe, it would not suffice to atone for his wrongdoing as it would be but the offering of a finite payment for an infinite debt. Moreover, the individual could not by his present obedience pay off the past debt, for he owes and is bound to yield to God a continual obedience. But satisfaction must be made by man, the offender, otherwise it is no satisfaction. Hence arises the necessity of the incarnation—the God-Man. Since Christ is God, He is able to cancel the infinite debt which mankind has incurred, and since He possesses the human nature the satisfaction He renders is accepted in the place of man, who is the real transgressor. Being divine, all that He does possesses an infinite value, and being human, God accepts Him in man's stead.

Thus Christ, by His own free will and in a spirit of perfect obedience, suffers and dies for the sins that the race has done and renders a full and complete satisfaction to the honor of God. The merit of Christ arising from the cross redounds to the benefit of the individual and furnishes a righteous ground for his salvation. Through the obedience and

sacrifice of His Son, God can with consistence to His self-respect offer pardon to the ill-deserving. Indeed, the merit arising from the sacrifice of Christ more than offsets the demerit of human guilt. It is not merely an equivalent for man's offenses, but is also a superabundant satisfaction.

The Protestant reformers took up this mediæval doctrine of the atonement and laid full stress on the expiatory character of the death of Christ as rendering satisfaction to God's honor which man had insulted by his sin. Indeed, the Reformers went further than Anselm, and did not shrink from saying "that Christ as our Lord and Representative bore our condemnation—entered into the full meaning of the judgment of God against our sins, and under experience of its uttermost *temporal,* and even as far as a sinless being might, of its *spiritual* woes—the pain and shame of our human sin, the assaults and temptations of Satan, the hiding of His Father's countenance—did honor to the righteousness implied in this connection of sin with suffering and death."[14]

It will readily be seen that this theory of the atonement was formulated under the influence of ideas which prevailed concerning

the nature of the state at the time that it took its rise. The relationship of God to the race here set forth is that of a mediæval monarch to his subjects. God as ruler and man as subject was the conception which dominated the thought of the theologian of the Middle Ages. And as a monarch who is insulted by his subjects demands reparation for his affronted feelings, so God insulted by man must be recompensed for the injury done to His personal dignity and honor. And the spirit of exaction shown by God is in keeping with that of the mediæval sovereign who enforces his demands regardless of the welfare of those whom he rules. The offended honor of God must be restored, even though it be by the death of His own Son.

The conception of God's relationship to mankind as conceived of by Anselm is a wholly inadequate view and furnishes no sufficient ground for the atoning work of Christ. Rulership is too external a bond to account for the wealth of God's love and good will to His creatures as revealed in the gracious life and wondrous death of Jesus. God's attitude to His children is too full of meaning to be construed under the relation of ruler and subject. Moreover, the end sought

is not a moral end but a strictly personal one. The atonement is represented as the enforcement of a personal claim, the vindication of the divine dignity. Christ dies on the cross, not to convey to men a worthy impression of the divine compassion, but to satisfy the affronted majesty of a Divine Sovereign. God's repulsion to sin, His love for the sinner, and His revealed mercy are lost sight of in the prominence given to personal interests. Thus the failure to lay hold on the deeper aspects of the atonement, such as God's abhorrence of evil, His unfailing self-sacrifice, and His desire to win men to lives of righteousness, wholly vitiates this doctrine of the cross.

It must also be pointed out that the Gospels nowhere teach that man's salvation depends upon the payment of a sufficient homage to the divine honor, which has been offended by sin. Such a view is wholly foreign to the message of the New Testament. The entire theory is built up of materials that lie wholly outside the Sacred Scriptures; it is altogether incapable of harmonization with the biblical doctrine of the character of God. Indeed, it stands in direct contradiction to the words of Jesus and His apostles concerning the meaning of the cross. The Scriptures every-

where represent salvation as flowing from God's mercy and good will. God forgives sin, not because His insulted honor has been vindicated, but because He loves the race of sinners. The good news of salvation to humankind springs, not from the mind of One whose personal dignity has been upheld, but from the heart of a gracious and loving Father. In our interpretation of the death of Jesus we must proceed, not on the analogy of civil law, but of that of paternal goodness. God, like the father of whom Jesus speaks, yearns over the sinner and opens His arms and heart lovingly to the returning prodigal. Moreover, the theory conflicts with the idea of grace. Since Christ's sufferings and death repair the injury done to God's honor, divine grace is forever excluded. In the nature of the cross, God cannot grant a pardon to sinful men since satisfaction has already been given Him for the loss He has sustained. Pardon under such conditions would be a farce, as there no longer exists any need of divine favor. Indeed, nothing remains to be pardoned, for Christ has more than made up for man's demerit. A theory which thus fails to do justice to the teachings of the New Testament concerning the meaning of Cal-

vary, and which also contravenes the exercise of God's free grace to a guilty race is self-nugatory and self-destructive. The theory is an inadequate interpretation of the work performed by Christ in His death and must be set aside.

In the seventeenth century Hugo Grotius, a lawyer, constructed a doctrine of the atonement which has since been known as the governmental theory. According to Grotius, Jesus did not die to satisfy the violated honor of God, but to vindicate His sovereign law and to safeguard the interests of His moral government. This theory conceived of the divine government as a kind of entity with which God Himself stands in relation and for whose exigencies He must provide. As far as any personal wrong to God had been done, sin might be overlooked, but for the sake of His administration His law must be held in honor and esteem. The death of Christ therefore sought to maintain God's authority, and to provide means whereby He might consistently with the uprightness of His moral rule pardon sin. It was a gracious plan adapted to vindicate the dignity of the Divine Sovereignty and to exhibit the divine righteousness. It was a tribute to the inviolability of

the moral order and a deterrent to all future disobedience. "God is the moral Governor," says Grotius; "his government must be maintained, law cannot be broken with impunity. Unless sin is punished the dignity of God's government would be destroyed. Therefore, that man may see how hot is God's displeasure against sin, Christ comes into the world and suffers the consequences of the transgressions of the race. The cross is an exhibition of what God thinks of sin."

The question may be asked, How is the law upheld and made honorable by the punishing of an innocent person in the place of a transgressor? In what way does the death of one person in the room of another maintain the divine government? And how does such a device produce true moral repentance in the human heart? How does such a scheme awaken in man those moral feelings which are essential to the divine forgiveness? These questions receive no answer on such a theory. As far as we can see, the whole thing is a fiction and has no place in the plan of redemption. It "degrades the work of Christ to the level of a governmental contrivance" and robs it of all virtue and meaning. Moreover, the theory is nowhere supported by the story

of the gospel. We fail to discover that the death of Christ is set forth as an expedient to safeguard the government of God and to magnify His law. The Bible speaks of redemption, ransom, sacrifice, but it nowhere teaches that the divine authority must be maintained before the individual can be restored to the divine favor. The cross is, rather, a manifestation of God's love for lost and guilty sinners. God must be regarded as a Father rather than a regent and men must be looked upon as children rather than as culprits. When this is done all notions which center around a rectoral theory of the atonement are seen to be mechanical and baseless.

We have been told by certain writers that Jesus suffered death upon the cross in the place of man; He died in man's room and stead. God could not forgive the sinner and bestow upon him His favor until an adequate penalty had been paid for his sin. Guilt must be punished, but not necessarily in the person of the guilty; divine justice is of such a character that it is equally satisfied with the punishment of the innocent as with that of the guilty. Dr. Shedd asserts that justice may allow of the substitution of one person for

another; the penalty of law may be omitted in respect of the real criminal and inflicted upon some one in his place. So long as one was found who was able and willing to take man's place and undergo the punishment due to a race of sinners God was altogether propitious. The substitute was found in Christ. The penalty which should have fallen upon man, since he had broken the divine law, was lifted from his shoulders and transferred to Christ. Jesus was not guilty of sin, but the transgressions of mankind were imputed to Him and He bore the punishment of death which the race deserved.

He knew how wicked man had been,
He knew that God must punish sin,
So, out of pity, Jesus said
He'd bear the punishment instead.

This has been known as the substitutionary theory of the atonement.

Luther not only emphasized the transferrence of our sin to Christ, but did not hesitate to identify Jesus with sinners, asserting that Jesus Himself was a sinner and accursed. In his commentary on Galatians he says: "And this, indeed, all the prophets did foresee in spirit, that Christ should become the greatest

transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel, and blasphemer that ever was or could be in all the world. For He being made a sacrifice for the sins of the world, is not now an innocent person and without sins. He is not now the Son of God born of the Virgin Mary, but a sinner, which hath and carrieth the sin of Paul, who was a blasphemer, an oppressor, and a persecutor; of Peter, which denied Christ; of David, which was an adulterer, a murderer, and caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the Lord; and briefly, which hath and beareth the sins of all men in His body; not that he Himself committeth them, but for that He received them being committed or done of us, and laid them upon His own body that He might make satisfaction for them with His blood." Robert South also declared that "Christ substituted his own body in our room, to receive the whole stroke of that dreadful retribution inflicted by the hand of an angry Omnipotence." According to Dr. Forrest, Christ vicariously bore the punishment of the world's sin. He says: "By His voluntary identification of Himself with sinners, He suffered as their representative the penalty of God's displeasure at human sin, and acknowledged it

to be just." Thus Jesus was literally punished for sinners, who, had He not interposed, would have been consigned by God to endless punishment.

The theory is at fault in that it assumes that the innocent can be punished for the guilty. In the nature of the case this is impossible. Punishment for sin can be inflicted only upon him who has committed it. The penalty attending sin can no more be transferred from the guilty to the innocent than can the sin itself. As it is absolutely impossible for one to take the moral relations of another, so it is utterly impossible for the sin of one to be punished in another. If sin is not punished in the person of him who has sinned, it must forever remain unpunished, for the penalty is inseparable from the sin; it is correlative to guilt or blameworthiness. To be sure, as a result of the closely interwoven relations of human life, the innocent may suffer and does suffer through the wrongdoing of others, but such suffering can in no wise be regarded as penal. In such a case the innocent suffers with the guilty, but is not punished for them. Thus Christ could not have been punished in the place of sinners, for He did no wrong, nor did He have

the guilty conscience. It was possible for Christ to be condemned by wicked men and to suffer death upon the cross, but it was not possible for Him to be condemned by God or bear the penalty due to others. Such a view is a travesty of the moral order of the universe.

It may also be said that the idea of the transference of punishment arose through a false conception of penalty. The theory under consideration regarded punishment as a physical suffering, an external penalty inflicted upon the wrongdoer. It was, accordingly, supposed that if an innocent person voluntarily suffered torture, imprisonment, or death for a guilty one, he was thereby punished for the guilty. But the endurance of such suffering would not, as we have already seen, constitute punishment. The punishment of sin is not to be thought of as consisting in an outward form of suffering, but in a state of consciousness, in the sting of remorse, and in moral disaster. Any other conception of punishment is fictitious and cannot be other than harmful in its results. Hence, when the nature of penalty is rightly conceived and the impossibility of its transference made clear, it becomes evident that

the innocent cannot bear the sins of the guilty or be punished in their stead.

Moreover, were it possible for the innocent to be punished for the wrongdoer, the situation would not in the least be mended. Wherein lies the justice of allowing the rogue to escape while the sinless man suffers and dies in ignominy and shame? How is justice served by the innocent and holy Son of God being tortured and put to death while the guilty are set free. James Martineau asks: "How is the alleged immorality of letting off the sinner mended by the added crime of penalty crushing the sinless? Of what man—of what angel—could such a thing be reported without raising a cry of indignant shame from the universal human heart? What should we think of a judge who should discharge the felons from the prisons of a city because some noble and generous citizen offered himself to the executioner instead?" Such a course would mend nothing, but would subvert rather than forward the ends of justice. Indeed, such a theory is a gross misrepresentation of the teachings of the New Testament as well as an affront to the good sense of mankind.

Again, the theory is inconsistent with itself.

The penalty of sin which was exacted of Christ in full cannot in justice be exacted a second time. Since Christ, as man's substitute, suffered the pain of death upon the cross, it follows that punishment cannot be demanded of those for whom Christ made atonement. Since God took vengeance upon His Son, He is forever debarred from punishing sinners for the same offenses. But this is what the advocates of the theory, with the exception of the most vigorous logicians, stoutly deny. They assert that though punishment to the full was exacted of Christ for human offenses, it may again be exacted of mankind. Although all sin has been punished in Jesus, the sinner may also be punished for the offenses for which Christ was put to death. This, however, is so discordant with our best conceptions of moral law and government that it must at once be abandoned. The inflicting of punishment by God for sin which has already been atoned for would be disastrous to the divine character and would also be flagrantly unjust to man. The theory, therefore, breaks down through sheer inconsistency.

Another theory of the atonement centers around the idea of propitiation. This view,

which has had wide acceptance, has set forth God as a being of anger and of revengeful passion, whose wrath toward man could be appeased and turned aside by nothing less than the blood of Christ. The literature of the Christian Church has represented God as burning with a wrathful purpose to hurl destruction upon mankind, and who was estopped in His destructive intent by Jesus, the innocent and heroic sufferer, who freely gave His life to slake the fierceness of the Father's wrath. Like a vindictive and angry judge, God would destroy the sinner, but Christ, out of compassion, flung Himself between him and the stern Father, and by offering Himself on the cross placated God's vengeance and caused Him to be propitious. One writer, in setting forth the divine attitude to man, says, "The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much in the same way as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath toward you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire."[15] Luther declared that "God's anger against the sinner was so fierce that he could be appeased only by the blood of his Son." Calvin wrote that "Christ

took upon himself and suffered the punishment, which, by the righteous judgment of God, impended over all sinners, and by this expiation the Father has been satisfied and his wrath appeased." Parkes asserted that "God drew his sword upon Calvary, and slew his only Son." This doctrine of the cross has found expression in Christian hymnology as well as in the creeds and dogmas of the Church.

> Rich were the drops of Jesus' blood
> That calmed God's frowning face,
> That sprinkled o'er the burning throne,
> And turned the wrath to grace.

It will readily be seen that pagan notions are here introduced into Christian thought. This doctrine of the atonement was formed under the influence of pagan ideas. The deities of heathen nations were conceived of as revengeful beings; they were wrathful and malignant toward mankind. They were constantly interfering in human affairs, hurling the thunderbolt, sending the plague and the earthquake, and punishing the evildoer. No offense against the gods that was not atoned for failed to go unpunished. To propitiate the wrath of the gods was man's constant

aim. This he did by sacrifice and worship. So with God. So full of anger and revenge is He that His favor can be secured only as His Son is stretched in deadly anguish on the cross.

Such a doctrine of the atonement is nowhere supported by the teachings of Jesus Christ or His apostles. The Bible nowhere teaches that God hates the race of sinners, and that the gracious and loving Saviour offered Himself on Calvary to appease His resentment and wrath. We nowhere find that Jesus represented God as full of anger or retaliatory justice which must first be overcome before His grace can be bestowed. In the Gospels there is not even a hint that God must be satisfied by sacrifice or propitiated by suffering before He is at liberty to pardon sin. Such a view of God's attitude to mankind vanishes before a correct interpretation of the teaching of Christ as a grim nocturnal shadow vanishes before the approaching dawn. Christ rather represents God as full of compassion, predisposed to mercy, and ready in advance to bestow His good gifts. The purpose of the cross was not to make God propitious, but by the exhibition of the divine love to put an end to man's rebellion

and sin and to bring him into moral union with the heavenly Father. That which moves God to forgiveness is not anything that has been done in an external manner, but repentance on the part of man and a willingness to do the divine will. Indeed, instead of God being rendered propitious, He was so favorable and loving that He freely gave His Son as a proof of His compassion and good will. Like the father who needs no propitiation in order to forgive his rebellious son, but who restores him when repentant to all the joys of sonship, so God willingly receives all who seek Him with penitent hearts. It was man, and not God, who needed to be placated. Man, and not God, was full of angry passion, hatred, and revenge.

> There is no wrath to be appeased
> In heaven above;
> No wrath with bitter anguish pleased,
> For God is love.

The last theory of the atonement which we shall consider is that linked with the idea of reconciliation. It has been taught that the end of the death of Christ was to reconcile God to the world. This theory has found expression in the articles and confessions of

the Christian Church, particularly in those subsequent to the Reformation. The Augsburg Confession declares that Christ died on the cross "that He might reconcile the Father to us, and might be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all the actual sins of men." The fourth article of the Church of England says of Christ: "He suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile the Father unto us." The Westminster Confession asserts that "the Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit once offered unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father, and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him." This doctrine, like those which we have already considered, is a misconception of the teachings of the New Testament concerning the meaning of Calvary. The plain word of the Scriptures is that Christ suffered and died, not to reconcile God to man, but man to God. The quarrel has been all on the one side, and the object of Christ was to bring the world to God and reconcile it to Him. God has always been full of tenderness and

pardoning mercy, and has ever sought to deliver men from sin and fill them with His own gracious and loving Spirit. That it was man, and not God, who stood in need of reconciliation is seen in the words of Paul in his letter to the Church at Corinth in which he says: "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Of similar import is the statement of the same apostle in his letter to the Ephesians in which he asserts that Christ hath abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, in order that he might reconcile both Jews and Gentiles unto God in one body by the cross. God, therefore, is not reconciled to men, but reconciles men to Himself by recreating them so that each one becomes a new being in Him.

The cross has thus suffered misrepresentation at the hands of those who see nothing

in it but ransom, propitiation, substitution, and satisfaction. Its merit has been represented as a legal rather than as a moral affair. It has become the target of theological debate rather than the very heart and essence of religion. Theories have been woven around it which instead of making it luminous and clear have violated its purpose and canceled its meaning. And all such theories must be given up. Mercenary terms and pagan ideas have no place in this doctrine. All interpretations of the cross which view the death of Christ as having any objective influence on God and the means of procuring favor for mankind must be repudiated. Theories that propitiate the divine wrath, that satisfy the divine honor, that punish the innocent in place of the guilty, that reconcile God to man—all such theories stand in the way of a just appreciation of Calvary and must be abandoned. The whole thing must be raised to a higher plane. Calvary must no longer be regarded as a transaction of the forum or of the market place; it must no longer be interpreted as the fulfillment of a bargain between God and Christ, but, rather, as the manifestation of the divine grace in all its fullness and beauty, in order that mankind

lost in sin might be redeemed. The merit of Calvary lies in its power to induce men to enter into the spirit of love and self-sacrifice which Christ revealed to the world. The cross was the device of the heavenly Father to lift the curse of sin out of human hearts and reclaim men to lives of truth and righteousness. It was the work of divine love, conceived in love, and executed in love.

Several things must first be said before we gather up in brief form the essential elements of the cross. In order to rightly estimate the redemptive work of our Lord, it will be necessary to keep in mind the fact that the atonement includes Christ's life of service and teaching as well as His humiliation and death. To separate Christ's death from His ministry, His sufferings from His doctrine, is but a one-sided presentation of His life and leads to but a partial appreciation of His atoning work. To isolate the cross of Jesus from the years of His labor and toil is to place it in a false perspective and to unduly exalt it as the means of man's redemption. While it is true, as we have already seen, that the writers of the New Testament pass over many important events in the public ministry of our Lord in order to relate more

fully those that took place at Calvary, yet it is a false view of the atonement which limits it to Christ's death. Indeed, we think the sufferings and death of Jesus have been unduly emphasized; the death apart from the life has no meaning. It was the spirit that Jesus manifested in His life and which was exhibited in His death that gave to the cross its redeeming power. Christ's sufferings and crucifixion must be regarded as of a piece with His lifework. Through His entire career, His whole work, there runs one central, unifying purpose. Parker once said, "Jesus was never off the cross." The cross was the consummation of His life of love and self-denial and the practical demonstration of His complete devotion to the will of God for the sake of the world. Thus the purpose of Calvary was no new thing; it was no new departure. It was no isolated act, but the inevitable climax of a lifelong sacrifice; it was the culminating point of a life filled with loving deeds and lowly service. It was the completion of our Lord's redeeming work which began with His birth and which was the consuming passion of His whole career.

We must not, says one writer, "think of Christ's death as his only sacrifice. From

certain standpoints it must have been harder for Christ to live on earth than to die. His life must have been one long passion—one continuous suffering, of loneliness, of disappointment, of sorrow. He was the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. All through His public career He must have suffered—suffered in the ignorances and selfishness and unspirituality of His own chosen twelve; suffered with the hypocrisy He saw in the Jewish Church and the blasphemies He beheld in the temple. Every wrong deed He saw must have hurt Him more than the spear which pierced His side, and every wrong word He heard He must have felt more than the nails which were driven into His hands and feet. Christ's truest Calvary may have been in Nazareth; this passion included all His life."[16]

It may also be borne in mind that the cross was not the work of Christ alone, but was also the work of God. God was the author of the plan of redemption; it was He who took the initiative in the work of saving the world; it was His mercy and grace that provided the sacrifice. It is God in Christ who is reconciling the world to Himself. Calvary enabled us to look into the heart and mind of the

heavenly Father. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." Jesus Himself says that the words He spake and the works He did were not His, but the Father's that sent Him. When we look at Jesus in all His relations to men, in His life of good deeds, in His solicitude for the erring and sinful, in His unfailing compassion, and in His self-sacrificing, we are compelled to confess that this is what God means to His lost children. Jesus smitten with sympathy for mankind in sorrow and pain, seeking the outcast and the lost, and giving Himself for a perverse and guilty race is a picture of the Eternal. In taking upon Himself the form of a servant, living the human life, submitting to the outrage and violence of wicked men, and becoming obedient unto death Christ teaches us what God is and what He is willing to do for a rebellious world. All that Jesus did in His life and death to save sinful men and to bring them to a realization of the life that was in God the heavenly Father was doing for infinite ages. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Fairbairn writes that the incarnation "is

to us the externalization of what was innermost in God, the secret of the Eternal manifested in time." Again he says that since God is capable of sorrow and suffering, we may "construe the sufferings and death of Christ as if they were the sacraments, or symbols and seals, of the invisible passion and sacrifice of the Godhead." Bushnell also holds that the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus is a fact of universal validity and application. He says: "The whole Deity is in vicarious sacrifice—in it from eternity and will to eternity be. We are not to conceive that our blessed Saviour is some other and better kind of Deity, a God composing and satisfying God; but that all there is in Him expresses God, even as He is, and has been of old—such a being in His love that He must needs take our evils on His feeling, and bear the burden of our sin. Nay, there is a cross in God before the wood is seen upon Calvary; hid in God's own virtue itself, struggling on heavily in burdened feeling through all the previous ages, and struggling as heavily now even in the throne of the worlds."[17] The cross, therefore, was no mere incident in the life of Christ, but was a work that had its roots deep in the heart and mind of God. It not only

expressed what was deepest and most characteristic in the being of our Lord, but also symbolized what was central in God—the eternal love, the eternal sympathy, the eternal self-giving.

Clow, in The Cross in Christian Experience, reminds us that the truth in the Patripassian heresy of the early Church was that the visible sacrifice which Jesus offered on the cross was the invisible sacrifice of God. Christ was the representative of God to mankind. If Jesus yearned and grieved over a race of sinners, God did the same. If Christ was smitten and wounded by sinful men, God was also hurt. "If there was a cross in the place which is called Calvary, there was also a cross in heaven. If a sword pierced the heart of Christ, a sword pierced the heart of God. Nay, more, that the fount and origin of the sacrifice are to be found in the love and compassion and will of God the Father. That is the truth aimed at in the old heresy."[18]

It remains for us to sum up briefly the prominent features of the meaning of the cross. The old theories, as we have seen, no longer meet the demands of present-day thought nor satisfy a growing spiritual consciousness. They are simply husks on which

the life of Christian believers can no longer be fed. A larger interpretation, which shall be a more adequate correlation of the teaching of the Gospels, must be given. And the emphasis in every theory of the cross in the future will be placed not on what Christ has done for God, but on what God in Christ has done for man. The view that the main object of the atonement was to remove from the mind of God an obstacle before His favor could be shown to the guilty will give way to the view that God has ever been full of good will to men and that He stands ready to save them from the death of sin. Along this line all future interpretations of the atoning work of our Lord will, we think, follow. With this thought in mind we lay down the following points.

First. The cross reveals the character and consequences of sin. President Hyde says that "the cross is the symbol of the consequences of sin, writ large." Here human guilt appears in all its horror; here the enormity of sin stands disclosed. Here man's enmity against God bursts forth in all its hideous character. Nowhere does sin appear so malignant, so repulsive, so treasonable against all goodness as when seen in the light

of the cross. It was sin, the self-will of man, that slew Christ. It was hypocrisy and malice, avarice and pride that embittered the life of our Lord and finally brought Him to Calvary. It was because the hearts of men were full of envy and murder, lying and lust, that His days were filled with sorrow and His end so tragic. To be sure, there are some who tell us that had man not sinned, the incarnation would have been necessary in order that humanity might be completed and that God might be perfectly revealed. It has been asserted that had sin not entered the world, God would have manifested Himself in His Son as a means to a more complete development of knowledge and life and to a growing fellowship on the part of the children with the Father. This, however, is a speculative question and has no particular bearing on the point at issue. Whether God would have been incarnated in human flesh or not had sin not arisen, is beyond our methods of knowledge. The fact that concerns us is that it was a world of sinners who were the objects of redeeming love. It was the entrance of sin into human experience that brought about Christ's life of toil and privation, His sorrow and suffering, His humiliation and death.

Sin made necessary the cross. It was human guilt that necessitated such a costly sacrifice. "The cross is the supreme manifestation of sin. There we see sin, not only in outward acts, but in Christ's exceeding sickness and sorrow under the burden of the world's wickedness. At the cross of Christ believers have always learned how evil sin is. Whether or not their doctrinal explanations of their own experience have been correct, the experience itself has been God-given, spiritual, saving. Christ has convinced them of sin. Christ condemns not his immediate persecutors, but the whole world. He reveals our malady as not weakness or accident, but guilt."[19]

Moreover, the cross tells us as nothing else could do how God thinks and feels about sin. Calvary not only reveals God as full of suffering love for a race of sinners, but it also shows His attitude toward the sin that caused His Son to die. Here God's relentless resentment against sin is seen; here His unbending antagonism to human selfishness is disclosed. Never before had God passed such condemnation on sin as He passed on it on Calvary. Sin on the cross is judged; and sin to be judged is to be condemned. Sin for God is no light and trivial thing, it is utterly and

irremediably bad. So alien is it to the moral universe that it cannot be treated with lenient indifference, but must be pursued with alert and relentless hostility. So awful is it in its nature and so ruinous in its consequences that God, to save mankind from its power, lives among them, labors and suffers, and gives Himself in death.

Secondly. The cross of Christ is a revelation of God's love and good will to the race. Calvary was preeminently the place where the grace of God was manifested. In the cross we see the supremest expression of the divine compassion and goodness. The cross is the divine love going forth to seek and save that which was lost. The reason why Jesus hangs on the cross and gives His life in a great act of deathless love is to convince mankind that God does not desire that any should perish, but that all might be saved from sin to holiness. Here we learn what God is, what He is willing to do, what He is willing to suffer in order to recover men from sin and fill them with His own spirit. God so loves men that He condescends to live with them, walk with them, serve them, and lay down His life for them that He might save and bless. In the face of Jesus as He is

lifted up to die we see reflected the great forgiving and loving heart of the Eternal. Here we study God's character, His attitude to His creatures, His thought for His children, and His mercy for sinners. Here we discover that God gives such an exhibition of His good will to sinners as to convince them forever that He is their loving Friend. Here we see that the sublime vision of the Divine Fatherhood which prophet and sage had but dimly discerned is now made luminous and glorious. Here we learn that the chief attribute of the Infinite is not justice but love, while His most prominent title is not that of Ruler but Father. Here God commends His love to us in its patience, its long-suffering, its redeeming, renewing, and saving power. Thus the cross was not the cause of God's love to the world, but His love was the cause of the cross. Calvary was not the ground of God's forgiving grace to humankind, but was the result and the expression of forgiveness in the divine fatherly heart. God was not gracious to sinful men because of the scene of suffering and death enacted at Calvary, but Christ gave Himself even to the bitter agonies of death that He might show God's sympathy and love, His kindness and care. "God com-

mendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Thirdly. The cross of Calvary illustrates the law of vicarious sacrifice. In the cross God is sacrificing for a world of sinners. This vicarious principle of sacrifice is inwoven into the very warp and woof of human existence. Indeed, there is no law more deeply imbedded into the history of mankind than that of sacrifice for the sake of others. Like a scarlet thread it runs through our entire social life and is written into the constitution of the moral universe. It is this principle which redeems humanity from its sordidness and gives to life its meaning and value. Noble and pure souls voluntarily take upon themselves suffering and pain in order that they may redeem the unworthy and lift them up to lives of honor and usefulness. Not a few give themselves in loving ministry to the downtrodden, the ignorant, the sick, and even lay down their lives in death. The strong suffer for the weak, the good for the bad, the innocent for the guilty. The mother sacrifices for her child, the father for his son, the sister for her brother, the soldier for his country. According to an old legend an innocent life had to be walled into the foundation of a

building if the structure were to endure. The legend contains a profound truth. The institutions which have been of the greatest benefit to man, and which have been of the most enduring character, have been those which have been built upon the lives of men and women who have given themselves in pure and unselfish service. Moreover, the nations of the earth owe not only whatever they possess of abiding worth but also their very existence to the sacrifices made on their behalf. W. L. Watkinson calls attention to the bitter price which England has had to pay in her work of civilizing degraded and inferior races. He reminds us that the bones of England's explorers, traders, and soldiers whiten every shore; her subjects sleep in gloomy forests, in wild wildernesses, in solitary seas. And this the English nation has done, not on any merely secular grounds, but that she may serve dependent peoples and teach them how to live. Virgil tells us that when Æneas tore the bough from the myrtle tree the tree exuded blood. "But this is only a poet's way of saying that civilization is a tree that is nourished, not by rain and snow, but by the tears and blood of the patriots and prophets of yesterday."

Now, it is from this standpoint that the cross must be interpreted. God is not exempt from the law of vicarious sacrifice. This law is no mere human and temporal affair; it is a law of the divine perfection and therefore one of universal application. It is a law which God has lodged in the human heart because it is constitutive of His own nature and lives and reigns in the heart of the eternal Love. And it is on Calvary that this principle receives its highest attestation. What men and women have been doing for one another in acts of service and sacrifice, that God does to its utmost in the gift of Himself in Christ. The sacrifice which reigned supreme in the life and labor and death of Jesus was eternal in God; it reflected the life of God in humanity. God in Christ came to live with men, to enter into the fellowship of their suffering, to take them at infinite cost to His heart, that He might fill them with His own Divine Spirit. And this law of sacrifice finds expression in every act of Christ. His laying aside of His eternal glory, His taking upon Himself the human form, His years of unselfish toil were a sacrifice. His deeds of kindness and mercy among those who disappointed Him, neglected Him, persecuted

Him, rejected Him were a sacrifice. And when wicked men condemned Him to death, nailed Him to the cross, and placed Him between malefactors to die, His sacrifice became the supreme and final sacrifice of God to the world. Calvary is preeminently the spot that is red with sacrificed blood. It was the place where God perfectly revealed Himself, the place where the vicarious law received its crowning manifestation, the place where the love-principle was at full tide.

Fourthly. The purpose of the cross was to induce man to forsake sin and lead a life of righteousness. The work of Christ is wrought upon and in man; it is a work of moral recreation. Its aim was to evoke in the individual and in the race that repentance for sin which is necessary to reconciliation with God. "The atonement burns into the soul of the sinner the sense of the evil and the shame of sin, forces him to look at it with God's eyes, to judge it with his conscience, to hate it with his hate—in a word, to change his own attitude to it for God's." Thus the gift of the Divine Son was to awaken in the souls of men that repentance and to enkindle that love which would prompt them to surrender themselves in obedience and filial trust

to the heavenly Father. And the suffering love of God for mankind as revealed in the cross furnishes the supremest incentive to repentance, faith, and holy living. The tenderness of Christ's spirit, the readiness of His sympathy, and the fullness of His love are calculated to inspire like virtues and a like spirit in human hearts. By His love Christ loosens the grip of sin on the soul and begets within a new disposition, a new character. His life, which was spent in the service of others, burdened and shadowed by man's need and guilt, and devoted to death in a great loving act of self-sacrifice, incarnated such an appeal as never can fail of some response from the sane mind and heart. In this lies the essence of the atonement. The merit of the cross consists in the appeal that it makes and the influence it exerts upon mankind. Its meaning lies in those moral elements which are adapted to create in the despairing and the hopeless feelings of contrition for sin and faith toward God. "Christ came into the world to renovate character. This was the one comprehensive end of his mission. Nothing was needed but the reconciliation of men to God, or a new spirit in men. Christ produces this through the power

exerted by Him as bringing into visible manifestation the forebearance, pity, yearning, forgiving love of God. Disobedience and distrust are both conquered; they melt away under this face-to-face view of the divine goodness."[20]

CHAPTER IV

SIN: ITS ORIGIN AND NATURE

WHENCE came sin? How did it arise? What was its origin? Why did a righteous and beneficent Deity allow it, with all its attendant confusion, sorrow, and pain, to enter the world? How long is it going to continue? These questions concerning sin have been asked in all ages of human history. They are as old as the race itself.

The origin and existence of sin constitutes one of the most perplexing questions with which religion, as well as philosophy, has to deal. It is one of the gravest problems of human life and is as full of mystery to-day as it has ever been. Indeed, there is no question which has so confused the minds of men as that of moral evil. Ever since the day when a dawning intelligence led man to seek the meaning and purpose of life the problem of the existence of sin has been a burden and a perplexity to the heart. So inconsonant is it with the conception of infinite love that the

faith of not a few noble spirits in the wisdom and benevolence of the Creator has suffered an eclipse. So discordant is it with the idea of an all-powerful and good Being, the Maker and Ruler of all things, that doubt and skepticism have arisen in the minds of many as to the moral goodness of the universe. A. M. Fairbairn tells us of one who had been trained to the office of the Christian ministry, who had distinguished himself as a scholar and thinker, and who had become the hope of his college, his professors, and his Church, but who as he one day attempted to proclaim in public what he had tried to learn in the study and in the classroom received such a vision of the evils that filled life and the impotence of the Will that seemed to rule the world that he vowed unto the God, in whose goodness he still believed, that were he only allowed to escape with his reason from that appalling place, he would never again lift up his voice in a pulpit until he had a message better fitted for the supreme crisis of the soul sojourning amid scenes so confused and perplexing. The message never came, and, true to his promise, he retired into a silence that nothing could tempt him to break, vanquished by the potency of evil. The thought of sin

which devastates the life of man and consumes the powers of the soul is, indeed, an appalling thought and one which many have found difficult to reconcile with infinite wisdom and goodness.

It must not be overlooked that a theistic philosophy deepens rather than illuminates the mystery of evil. The more firmly the conviction is established that the world has its source in an all-powerful and beneficent Creator, the more perplexing becomes the fact of sin. If human existence and the physical universe were rooted, not in free personality, but in mechanical necessity, sin, while remaining an experience of life, would no longer perplex the reason. Indeed, in a mechanical and necessitated scheme evil as a problem would not exist, for in such a scheme there could be no choice and thus no morality and no sin. In a world where every thought was necessitated and every act the outcome of mechanical processes the actual would be all and the ideal distinctions of virtue and vice, goodness and evil would have no more significance than they would have in the field of physical or chemical action. In fact, in such a system such distinctions would be wholly meaningless. Thoughts, beliefs, and acts

would simply exist and would be altogether devoid of moral content. It is, however, when men believe in a free and benevolent Deity, who has permitted sin in all its hideous forms to enter the world and lay waste human life, that the mystery deepens. It is when God is believed in as the Creator of men and the Father of spirits that sin becomes a grim and acute problem.

In an attempt to solve the problem of evil not a few writers have asserted that it is rooted in the very constitution of things and can in no way be gotten rid of. It is a principle inherent in the nature of the universe, coexisting with the Creator and setting limitations to His plans and government. Physical nature is diabolical and has set itself up as a rival to God, opposing and curtailing the divine power. According to Plato, matter was intractable and vile and prevented the complete and perfect realization of the Divine Idea. While the Creator, working with the material which He had at His disposal, made the best world that He could, it was nevertheless a world which, owing to the inexplicable viciousness of things, fell far short of the perfect conception. John Stuart Mill also suggested that the Deity in His creative

energy was limited. Mill was quite willing to deny the omnipotence of God in order to preserve His goodness. In the creation of the world God meant well, but was unable to overcome the difficulties that confronted Him. God's goodness is infinite, His wisdom is perfect, but somehow limitations were set to His creative power by the badness inherent in the very constitution of matter. The emptiness of all such theories, however, appears when it is seen that the world is not something that has proper existence in itself and stands over against God, but is the constant expression of His thought and will. The physical universe must no longer be conceived as a substance existing apart from the Infinite, and inherently bad, but the manifestation of divine energy. And when it is seen that the world has its meaning in the divine thought and its reality in the divine will, the theory that it is intractable and vile, setting limits to the creative power of God, becomes as baseless as a dream.

Of the several views held concerning the origin of sin we think that the view which regards its possibility as necessary to the existence of a moral universe alone worthy of consideration. We call attention to the word

"possibility," for a moral world could well exist without the actuality or the experience of sin. A moral universe, however, without the possibility of evil as one of its inherent and fundamental constituents would, we think, be beyond the power even of the Infinite. Such a world would be absolutely impossible. This is the crux of the whole question. Sin is rooted in free will, and free will is the one thing which it was necessary for God to give to man to constitute him a moral being. Freedom of the will is a constitutional and inalienable endowment of the soul. Without the gift of freedom man as a moral agent could not be; it is the crowning endowment of human personality. Man's power of choice, his power to choose with or against God, was the one thing which God had to bestow upon the soul and the one thing which He cannot take away without destroying man as a moral person. Now, freedom carries with it the power to sin; since man is free, he is able to choose evil. The ability to sin is thus rooted in the very constitution of man; it is an inherent and original power of the soul.

In a world where disobedience would be impossible obedience would also be impossible;

if there could be no vice, there also could be no virtue. The individual who would be incapable of sinning would also be incapable of virtuous conduct. Ability to do good must exist side by side with ability to do evil. If a world is to be created in which moral progress may exist, it must be a world in which moral evil is also possible. A moral person could no more be created without the power to choose the darkness than could a circle be drawn without the concave or the convex. Beings who could live under moral law and progress in moral goodness and share with God His own life could come into being only as they possessed the power of contrary choice. In the process of spiritual development the ability to do wrong must needs be present.

It will readily be seen that a world of beings devoid of the gift of freedom, and consequently of the power to choose good and evil, would, in the very nature of the case, be no moral world at all. Were man compelled to choose the good, he would at once cease to be a moral agent and would sink to the level of a mere automaton. Such a being would be but a mere mechanical contrivance, responsive to impact from without, but wholly destitute

of power to initiate and direct life. The life of such a one would have neither merit nor demerit; it would be neither virtuous nor vicious; it could neither degenerate in moral badness nor progress in moral goodness, but would be as empty of moral content as is the falling snowflake or the tiny dewdrop. Such a race of beings God doubtless could bring into existence, but it would be one in which He could take no delight. As inert mechanical things they would possess no worth for themselves and would add but little to the life of the Infinite. The possibility of sin is thus a metaphysical necessity; it is an indispensable condition of moral experience. A moral world can exist only in and through a race of creatures who are free, that is, who possess the power to choose good and evil.

This does not mean, however, that it is impossible to have good without evil. It does not imply that a world of moral beings could not exist apart from the fact and experience of sin. It merely states that in a moral world the possibility and not the knowledge of evil is an indispensable element. Sin as an experience is by no means essential to moral living. It is the ability to choose the evil as well as the good, and not the actual fact of sin, that

lies at the root of the moral universe. "Sin," says Lyman Abbott, "is not a help in development; it is a hindrance. But temptation is a help; it is an indispensable means." Such, we think, was the condition that made possible the moral life of Jesus. Of sin as an experience of the heart He knew naught; the tempter found nothing in Him. The dark temptations, however, which are made possible through the power of choice were constantly present to His pure soul; ever and anon He passed through the fires of temptation. And His growth in moral character and His advance in favor with God and man were due, not to the subjugation of sin as an actual state of the heart, but sprung out of those choices which always accorded with the will of the heavenly Father. And the moral life of Jesus is the type for the moral life of the race. His life in its moral fullness and beauty is the pattern and ideal toward which all must strive.

The agnostic, therefore, who exclaimed, "Were I God, I should have made goodness catching rather than sin," had no insight into the origin of sin. If sin is contagious, the responsibility rests not with God but man, who let it into the world. The gate through

which sin entered was opened by the individual. Had God locked the gate and put His shoulder against it, man's moral freedom and responsibility would have been at once destroyed. It was through the exercise of free moral agency that sin arose, and even God had to respect man's free will. Sin which was possible through moral freedom became a realized fact when the creature surrendered his will to the evil thoughts of the heart. Sin as a grim reality and a dire experience of life must be charged to man, in whose heart it found its first abode.

The nature of sin, as well as its origin, also constitutes a problem. It too has been a fruitful source of discussion and debate. During the centuries past not a few theories have been brought forward to show wherein lies the true character of evil. It will be our purpose to examine briefly several of the most important theories and to point out their agreement or disagreement with the teachings of Scripture and the experience of mankind.

It has been declared by some that sin is man's inheritance from his brute ancestry; it is the survival in man of the ape and the

tiger. The wickedness of man's heart is said to be the outcropping of the old propensities of the brute life. We are told that cruelty, revenge, and lust, as well as other forms of vice, are the inevitable remnants of the animal which has not been completely sloughed off. And sin constitutes a normal stage in man's career in his progress upward from brutehood. John Fiske says that "original sin is neither more nor less than the brute inheritance which every man carries within him, and the process of evolution is an advance toward true salvation." Borden P. Bowne asserts that "sin is a relic of the animal not yet outgrown, a resultant of the mechanism of appetite and impulse and reflex action for which the proper inhibitions are not yet developed; and only slowly does it grow into a consciousness of itself as evil."

Now, it may possibly be true that man as a physical being has been evolved from the animal, and that not a little of sin finds a basis in the savagery and brutishness of the jungle which have not yet been fully outgrown. But sin is not to be found in man's animal nature, but in wrong choice, which is rooted in freedom. The brute is wholly unmoral, and as such cannot transmit that which it does not possess;

there is no evil in the animal world, for it lies below the moral plane. It cannot transmit such sins as envy and pride, lying and lust, malice and revenge, for it knows naught of them; such sins wholly transcend the animal realm. Man is not brute, but man. In his spiritual nature, which constitutes his true self, man is not a descendant of the ape, but a child of the Highest. The savagery of the brute, therefore, which has passed down into the human life does not constitute sin; it is only as the soul yields itself to the spirit of the brute in preference to the higher appeal of love that sin arises. Man is to be blamed, not because he retains something of the animalism out of which he has come, but because he, a free spirit, surrenders himself to the lower impulses and passions instead of finding his completion in God. "The animal mind knows not God, is not subject to his law, neither indeed can he, just because it is animal, and as such is incapable of right and wrong. If man were an animal and nothing more, he could not sin. It is by virtue of being something more that he becomes capable of sin. Sin is the yielding of the known higher to the known lower. It is the soul's abdication of its being to the brute."[21] It

will therefore be seen that sin cannot be explained in terms of brutism; it is not an inheritance from the brute world. Its character is of a different order.

Again, sin has been regarded as the necessary product of the sensuous nature; it arises from the connection of the spiritual being of man with the physical. It is due to the dominion of the body over the soul. The bodily appetites and needs are insistent and powerful and keep the spirit in subjection; according to Spinoza, the spirit becomes enslaved, since it lacks the ability to regulate the sensuous affections. Thus the flesh is not merely opposed to the spirit but controls and conquers it; the physical gains the mastery over the spiritual and becomes the very source and seat of evil. This view of sin, it may be said, is the necessary outcome of the assumption of ancient thought that matter is essentially bad. Oriental philosophy, as we have seen, conceived of physical nature as evil and as the source of all vileness. The body, which partakes of the essential badness of matter, hangs as a clog about the higher self, weighting it down with sinful appetites and passions. Indeed, the body has been likened to a prison in which the soul is incarcerated during the

earthly life; it is, as Plato asserted, the tomb of the soul and makes impossible high spiritual growth and attainment.

Now, it cannot be denied that there is a very close connection between the body and the soul; life has a physical as well as a spiritual basis, and as a result of the intimate relation of the two the sensuous affections oppose the inner life, retarding its progress and stunting its growth. But though the body is closely connected with the spiritual nature and furnishes a basis for its development, it is not the true agent of the spiritual life. The soul is the true source of experience; all acts receive their moral content from the spirit. Sin resides not in the sensuous nature, but in the perverse and wicked heart; the senses are the servants of the soul and not the seat of evil. The physical nature provides the field of moral and spiritual conflict, but in this struggle sin is not implied. The sensuous part of man, therefore, may partly explain man's liability to sin, but does not itself explain sin. It may be the occasion of sin, but is not in itself sinful. This can be explained only as we go behind the physical and find it in the contradictions existing within the spirit. The blame for sin must be thrown,

not upon the affections arising from the senses, but upon man himself, who cravenly yields to the lower passions. The Scriptures rightly recognize the source of sin as being in the soul and not in the body. Moral evil is rooted in the heart. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These evil things come from within and defile the man. Moreover, many evil dispositions, such as envy, pride, unbelief, malice, and revenge, cannot have their origin in the affections of the senses, since they have no necessary connection with the body. Disembodied spirits may partake of these sins equally with human beings.

Another theory attempts to explain sin by denying its existence. Sin has no reality; it is eliminated wholly from the catalogue of facts. According to this view, sin is the necessary background against which moral goodness is realized. As the darkness is essential to a true appreciation of the light, so sin is indispensable to a knowledge and appreciation of the good. Indeed, sin exists not for its own sake, but in order to enable the good to express itself. It thus is a negative quantity, a defect, a failure.

We are told by the exponents of this view that as sweet things can be enjoyed only as they are combined with the bitter, so moral goodness can be appreciated only as it appears in connection with moral evil. As, according to Leibnitz, eminent composers often mingle discords with harmonies so as to stimulate and, as it were, prick the hearer, who becomes anxious as to what is going to happen and is so much the more pleased when presently all is restored to order, so sin is the discord which mingles with the harmonies of life in order that the excellence and perfection of the world may be heightened. As painters employ shadows so as to bring forth the lights and colors, and as poets use the base and the ugly so as to portray the noble and the beautiful, so sin is a stimulus and a foil to goodness. Friedrich Paulsen writes: "The evil has no value whatever as such, and no claim to existence. It exists only for the sake of the good, to enable it to act and realize itself. We have the same relation here as between light and darkness. The painter cannot paint without employing shadows; his aim, however, is not to paint shadows, but lights and colors. So too the poet cannot paint without shadows, he needs the ugly, the

vulgar, and the base. It is not his purpose, however, to portray these, but the beautiful, the good, and the grand, and in order to bring them out more clearly he places the base by the side of the good, to confound the evil and exalt the good. So, too, the good exists in history and in life for its own sake, and evil for the sake of the good, as a stimulus, as an obstacle, as a foil. It is a negative quantity, valueless as such; it receives a kind of power and reality only through its opposite, the good. But its power does not benefit it, for it is characteristic of evil that it has no constructive force, because it is divided against itself.''[22]

> All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
> All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
> All discord, harmony not understood;
> All partial evil, universal good;
> And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
> One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.

Sin, therefore, cannot be rightly estimated in itself, for it is but an incident in the development of life. It must be looked at from the standpoint of the whole and not viewed as an isolated fact. And when regarded in this manner it is seen to be necessary to the completion of human experience. Did we see it

in its proper relation to the whole of life, we would recognize it as essential to the highest perfection.

The theory errs in that it regards sin as a negative quantity, a nonentity. It is found wanting in that it avers that evil has no reality or power. Such a view of sin obliterates all moral distinctions and lands us in the bog of pantheism. If evil is good, if whatever is, is right, then conscience and the moral world immediately vanish. But such a doctrine is contradicted by the stern and stubborn facts of human life. Sin is not gotten rid of by the declaration that it has no reality in itself, but exists merely to exalt the good. Sin is an actual experience, a grim reality. Equally with goodness, it is positive in its conception and execution; equally with goodness, it is rooted in thought and volition. Evil choices are the voluntary expression of a wicked heart as good choices are the voluntary expression of an obedient heart; all alike have their source in moral freedom. Choices of evil are not accompanied by weakness of will and character; they denote vigor and strength. The individual is never more vigorous and alert than when he is planning some evil course or carrying into effect some evil

choice which he has already made. The sins of murder, lying, lust, insolence, and selfish ambition—in a word, the crimes and moral offenses that fill us with horror and stir us with indignation are not something that can be described by pale negatives, but something that is actively and aggressively bad. Man is mightily alive in his evil choice.

"By all the biblical philosophers," says Washington Gladden, "sin is regarded as possessing the same relation to the moral character that death has to the physical organism. To say that sin is a nonentity—that there is no such thing—is to deny the most terrible fact within human knowledge. In truth, there is no evil in this universe but an evil will; but an evil will is just as much a reality as a good will is; and any theory which blurs this distinction or tries to put it out of sight is not merely ridiculous, it is pestiferous; there is palsy and perdition of the soul for those who dare to live by it."

Moreover, it must not be overlooked that if sin is a necessary condition of goodness, it cannot be eradicated from human life without the eradication of goodness also. If the two are coessential and inseparable, it follows that both are either temporal or eternal. If

the evil is indispensable to the good, the elimination of the former means the destruction of the latter. The success of holiness would be, as George A. Gordon strikingly puts it, a Samsonian victory; the defeat of moral evil would be the end of the moral world. Sin, therefore, must always remain an element in moral experience. The Christian consciousness is in error in the assumption that by growth in moral character sin will finally be outgrown and lapse into a mere memory. The hope that by the processes of divine grace the heart and life of man will eventually be cleansed of evil is as unsubstantial as a dream. Moreover, if sin is inseparable from goodness, it will be necessary to carry this moral distinction into the life of God Himself and to assert that evil is essential to the moral perfection and complete harmony of His being. A doctrine of sin which thus contradicts the clear teachings of Scripture as well as the rational hope of mankind, and which at the same time outrages human thought, must be set aside as wholly false. A theory which makes evil a necessary element in moral knowledge and life is one which destroys itself by its own inherent absurdities.

Wherein, then, lies the essential nature of sin? In what does the principle of evil consist? What term best defines the state of the sinful heart? The word which best sets forth the true nature of sin is selfishness. Julius Müller in his profound analysis of sin convincingly shows that every form of sin has its root in selfishness. It is this view of sin that Paul has in mind when he says that Christ died to save men, in order that they might no longer live unto themselves but unto Him which died for them. Sin is a preference for self instead of a preference for and a supreme love to God. It consists in the choice of the self in the place of Him who is our highest good. It is an undue self-assertion, self-conceit, self-exaltation. It is the revolt of the personal will against the divine law and righteousness, and therefore against all the highest interests of the soul. Sin is an inner perversion, a blindness in moral vision to truth and to goodness. It is not error, or weakness, or natural imperfection; it is moral perversity, self-love, self-righteousness. It is discord with God, disharmony with His will and nature, the unfilial life. It is lovelessness, self-glorification, the choosing of the creature instead of the Creator.

"Samuel Harris resolves sin into four form of selfishness: self-sufficiency instead of faith, self-will instead of submission, self-seeking instead of benevolence, and self-righteousness instead of humility and reverence." And from selfishness have sprung all those forms of sin which have torn the world with discord and filled it with poverty, wretchedness, disease, and death. From the choice of the self as supreme have arisen the individual sins, the vices, the hatreds, the social wrongs which have cursed human life and oftentimes made existence an intolerable burden. From this deadly taproot have sprung up the tree of evil laden with the poisonous fruits of passion, lust, pride, envy, jealousy, avarice, anger, hate, and greed. One writer says that "every form of sin is seen to be a form of selfishness. Lying perverts the truth in the interest of self; sensuality perverts appetite for its own selfish indulgence; and avarice, ambition, vanity, and pride are all the self absorbing the world. Even the more spiritual sins of unbelief and self-righteousness are affirmations of the self against the will and righteousness of God. Truth itself may be sought as a personal triumph and thereby becomes selfishness. Thus all forms of evil

run down into selfishness as the taproot of evil."[23]

That sin is selfishness appears from the fact that it is the very opposite of the spirit of the Christian religion. The essence of the Christian faith consists in love; love is the virtue from which all other Christian virtues spring. Man's obligation to God and to his fellows is summed up in the principle of love. Love is the fulfilling of the law. The ideal of the religion that Jesus brought to men is a life of filial obedience to God and of loving service to man. Now, the opposite of this spirit of obedience toward God and this spirit of sympathy toward man is selfishness, or perverse self-assertion. He who makes self the guiding principle of his action cannot make God and man the object of his thought and affection. Paul in his letter to the Galatians clearly shows that sin has its root in a selfish spirit and is the contrary of love. On the one side he places the fruit of the spirit —love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; on the other the works of the flesh—adultery, fornication, uncleanness, hatred, variance, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings, murders, drunkenness. These contrasted passages

plainly show that the essence of sin is lovelessness; its nature is the opposite of the law of love. Thus sin is the self-seeking disposition which supplants God in the heart and life; it is the spirit which prefers one's own will to the divine will and which puts the interests of the creature in the place of those of the Creator. Sin is treason against God.

Sin is found in character as well as in action; it has its seat in the heart, in the inner life. It is a perversion and corruption of the will. Sin is primarily not a matter of conduct but of thought and motive. The worst sins are sins of disposition. The inner desires and states which are averse to God and His holiness constitute sin as does the full-blown guilt. Anger in the heart is murder; lust is adultery. The unholy purpose, the impure motive, the unclean thought, the unkind judgment are the evil germs which corrupt the springs of life. Man is defiled by the evil thoughts which proceed from within. It has been said that the primary emphasis of Christ against sin was against sins of disposition. In the eyes of Jesus nothing was so hateful as a selfish and malicious spirit. The sins against which He hurled His sternest denunciations were those of pride, hypocrisy,

deceit, self-righteousness, resentment, unmercifulness. While He tolerated no form of wrongdoing, the sins that He especially castigated were those of the heart and mind. "His scathing sentences were directed against the spirit of inhumanity; against the spirit of greed; against hard-heartedness, however manifested; against pride, arrogance, selfishness, pitilessness, oppression, absorbing self-regard; against every disposition of the mind and heart which made the burden of life heavier for any fellow human being."

The Holy Scriptures not only recognize the presence of sin but look upon it as a calamity of most deadly character. The malignity of evil is portrayed in the Bible in vivid colors. Sin is a loathsome disease, a destroying pestilence, a deadly blindness. It is a moral bondage, a perversion of man's true nature, a putting out of the spiritual sight. It is the ruination of the moral health, the evil eye which leaves the whole body full of darkness. Sin pollutes the springs of life and issues into moral and spiritual death. Terrible is the indictment which the Bible draws against those who become vain in their imagination and darkened in heart, and who give themselves up to uncleanness through the lusts of

their own hearts to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. Such are full of all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; such are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.

The malignity of sin is not only recognized by the Holy Scriptures, but is seen in its manifold forms by all who closely observe the ongoings of human life. The amount of evil which a study of the facts of life reveals is utterly appalling. Sin appears in myriad forms; it is a hydra-headed monster. It appears in envy and lying, malice and murder, dishonesty and fraud, greed and hate. It bursts forth into anger, uncontrolled passion, strife, cruelty, war, bloodshed. It is at the root of all the sorrows and ills of human existence. It gives to life a deep tragic quality and darkens not only earth but heaven. What ravages sin has wrought in the earth! What disasters it has brought to human hearts and human homes! It blights, weakens, curses, and works out under unalter-

able law the infinitudes of sorrow, pain, and death. Like a river which, poisoned at its source, spreads disease along its banks and carries death to thirsty men and animals who stoop to drink, so is sin, which as a bitter and deadly stream flows through the race. "The whole face of society is seamed and scarred with every line and feature of evil, and the human heart is a scene of warring passions, pain and pathos, tragedy and tears. Poverty and pestilence, disease and suffering and death, strife and war, vice and crime-manifold are the fires and furies that kindle a hell on earth."[24]

The question here arises as to the relation of the individual to the sin of the race. Is the sinner punished for his own sins alone or is he also punished for the sins of his forbears? Is man condemned and lost for the wrongdoing of his first parents as well as for his own transgressions? It has been held that through the sin of our progenitors all were made sinners. Whatever the penalty was that attached to the law, Adam by his wrongdoing incurred it not only for himself but for his posterity also. His apostasy is the ground of the guilt and condemnation of all mankind. Since he was the legal head and

representative of the race, all men are chargeable with the consequences of his offense; the guilt and penalty resulting from his sin have been imputed to and incurred by all. One writer says: "The guilt a man has upon his soul at his first existence is one and simple, viz.: the guilt of the original apostasy, the guilt of the sin by which the species first rebelled against God." Even death has been looked upon by many writers as a punishment inflicted upon men because of Adam's sin. This appears in the following citation, in which the death of infants is regarded as a punishment for the sin of the first pair. "Death did not come upon them as a mere natural effect of their father Adam's sin and death, but as a proper and legal punishment of sin; for it is said, his sin brought condemnation upon all men. Now, this is a legal term, and shows that death is not only a natural but a penal evil, and comes upon infants as guilty and condemned, not for their own actual sins, for they had none, but for the sin of Adam, their legal head, their appointed representative."[25]

Now, it is an assured fact that an evil nature has come down to us through the sin of our first parents. The individual is not

an isolated spirit but a member of the race and organically connected with the whole species. And since he is a part of the whole, he has inherited the evil dispositions and moral corruption of his progenitors. Man is born into the world with sinful tendencies that predispose him to wrongdoing. Moral corruption, like a filthy stream, has flowed through the blood of humanity and has passed down the ages from generation to generation. An evil nature, like a cancerous disease, has fastened itself upon the very vitals of man's being and is sapping his moral and spiritual strength. In addition to the noble impulses and the godlike capacities that the soul contains, it is the seat of inclinations which justify the harsh remark that man is the wicked animal. And this sinful nature has been inherited by all, regardless of rank, position, culture, breed, or birth. If one were to probe deep enough, he would find the same evil dispositions in his own soul. Any crime can be understood, as Emerson asserted, if the individual will look into his own heart. Goethe exclaimed, "I see no fault committed which I too might not have committed." The apostle Paul was caught in the toils of this evil nature and was constantly checked and

hindered in the performance of the good. "But I see," he says, "another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The sinful nature inherited from the species was to Paul a grim reality and kept him in the throes of a terrible conflict. But the possession of an evil nature which has been inherited from the race does not imply guilt. The moral corruption of the heart which has been produced by racial transgression does not carry with it desert of punishment. It is going altogether too far when the apostasy of Adam is considered as personally imputable guilt. The evil dispositions which man inherits from his forbears and which predisposes and leads to sin are not themselves sinful. The individual is blameworthy not for hereditary evil tendencies, in whose origin he had no part, but for his own personal transgressions and the consequences arising therefrom. The sin for which he stands condemned is not that of his first father but that which is the result of his own wrong choices. As all moral action is individual, so all moral guilt as well as all

moral worthiness is also individual. The theologians have talked of the participation of each member of the race in the common race-guilt, as if guilt were a thing that could be transferred from father to son. But there is no common guilt; all guilt is personal. It would be as reasonable to affirm the existence of a common self, the agent of the common guilt, as to affirm the existence of the guilt. The guilt of one person can no more be transferred to another person than can thought and act. Guilt is predicable only of voluntary transgression of known law. It is only as the evil tendencies of the heart and the inner disorder become appropriated by the free will that sin and guilt arise. "Guilt cannot possibly be a matter of inheritance, and consequently original sin can be affirmed of the posterity of Adam only in the sense of hereditary corruption, which first becomes an occasion of guilt when it is embraced by the will of the individual." Lyman Abbott states the matter correctly when he says: "No man ever inherited sin. There is not any original sin. Men inherit appetites and passions, they inherit temptations, they inherit weaknesses and frailties and infirmities, but they do not inherit sin, and they do

not inherit virtue. Men are neither born sinners nor saints."[26]

With the doctrine of original sin has been linked that of total depravity. According to the doctrine of total depravity, man has through the sin of his progenitors suffered complete paralysis of his moral nature. Sin has wholly corrupted every part of his being; the stream of iniquity has flowed through every avenue of his soul and has defiled his entire nature. His intellect has become darkened, his emotions impure, and his will altogether rebellious and impotent. Within him dwells no good thing. He is utterly indisposed, wholly destitute of spiritual good, and inclined only to evil continually. Edwards asserts that "men are totally corrupt in all their faculties and all the principles of their nature; all their senses are only inlets and outlets of sin, channels of corruption. There is nothing but sin, no good at all."

The doctrine of total depravity is one which, however, is being rapidly outgrown and abandoned. Moreover, we think that the term "total depravity" has been an unfortunate one and has led to no little confusion and error in the field of religious thought. The phrase is nowhere found in the Scriptures,

and it is one which has done more harm than good in the history of Christian doctrine. When rightly understood the doctrine of total depravity does not mean that man is wholly destitute of spiritual good and inclined unto all evil, but that his entire nature—intellect, feelings, and will—has been affected by sin. The faculties with which man has been endowed have not suffered total moral collapse, but have become weakened so that they cannot perform normally their proper and designed functions. Every power of the mind has become perverted by the sinful nature. That native moral corruption has extended to every part of man's being is the rightful meaning of the doctrine, and not that the soul is in total moral ruins. Man, while disabled by the inborn sinful dispositions, still possesses power to respond to the appeal of divine grace and love. Though his moral nature has become diseased through evil passions, he still has a redemptive capacity and may become responsive to the touch of God. Though hurt by sin, there still remains in him some receptivity for the vitalizing influence and guiding agency of the Divine Spirit. The powers of the soul have been deranged, but not rendered wholly impotent, by hereditary corruption.

CHAPTER V

SIN: ITS PENALTY AND FORGIVENESS

There are few truths of the Holy Scriptures which are taught more clearly or with more reiteration than that of the penalty of sin. On nearly every page of the Sacred Word stands out the declaration with bold and striking emphasis that sin shall not go unpunished. The prophet of the Old Testament declares that it shall be ill with the wicked, for the reward of his hands shall be given him. The apostle of the New Testament writes that he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. Our Lord teaches with an accent that brings conviction to His hearers that sin when it is finished produces moral paralysis and death. Of the consequences of evil the Word of God gives sure and certain warning.

Human history no less than the Bible is emphatic in its teaching that sin degrades and destroys. Equally with the word of Holy Writ is that of human experience that those

who rebel against God shall be devoured with the sword. A study of the doings of the nations and the life of the individual brings the overwhelming conviction that the way of the transgressor is hard. No proposition can be more easily established from the ongoings of mankind than that the wages of sin is death. Evil thoughts, words, and actions work themselves out in moral and spiritual disaster. Greed, cruelty, and selfishness leave their impress upon the mental and moral structure of the sinner and finally compass his ruin. The mark of Cain is upon every offender of the law of God. So says the Bible. So says human life.

With this statement of the consequences of sin we go on to a more detailed description of its penalty.

We note first that sin is punished in the guilty conscience which it produces. A guilty conscience is an unquenchable fire. Conscience outraged scourges the soul as with a whip of cords. Sin ever rises up to confront the evildoer and to fill him with remorse and gloom. The guilty sinner is haunted with a constant fear. He cannot shake off the Nemesis that, like a hell-hound, dogs his tracks. His sleep is troubled with dreams,

and every sin that he has done sends its ghost to haunt his soul. And it is utterly impossible to silence the voice of conscience; in even the most obdurate and callous it makes itself felt. Conscience makes sin its own detector, judge, tormentor. Somewhere and some time it lays its hand upon every evildoer. And the brief that it brings in against the transgressor of the divine law is one of stern and just condemnation. Cicero wrote in *De Legibus:* "We talk as if all the miseries of men were comprehended in death, pain of body and sorrow of mind; but the sting of conscience, the remorse of guilt, is in itself the greatest evil." As Banquo's ghost haunted Macbeth with its silent but awful horror, so the consciousness of sin haunts the heart of the guilty sinner. It is an accusing conscience which makes Macbeth ask:

"Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from this hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one, red."

"O coward conscience, how thou dost afflict me."

"In a trial at Syracuse, Earl, the wife-

murderer, thanked the jury that had convicted him, declared the verdict just; begged that no one would interfere to stay the course of justice; said that the greatest blessing that could be conferred on him would be to let him suffer the penalty of his crime." In Plattsburg, at the close of another trial in which the accused man was a life convict who had struck down a fellow convict with an ax, the jury, after being out two hours, came in to ask the judge to explain the difference between murder in the first degree and second degree. Suddenly the prisoner rose and said, "This was not a murder in the second degree. It was a deliberate and premeditated murder. I know that I have done wrong, that I ought to confess the truth, and that I ought to be hanged." Still more striking and terrible are the words of another murderer whose confession while in jail in the city of Boston runs in part as follows: "Deeply penitent of my sin and earnestly desiring as far as in my power lies to make atonement, I hereby confess that I am guilty of the offense of which I stand indicted. I am moved to this course by no inducement of self-benefit or leniency. Heinous as is my crime, God has not wholly abandoned me, and my conscience and man-

hood, however depraved and blighted, will not admit of my still further wronging by a public trial her whose pure young life I have destroyed. Under the lashing of remorse I have suffered and am suffering the torture of the damned." To be haunted by the remembrance of past sins is indeed a sad and bitter thing. To be scourged by a whip whose lash cuts to the quick until the soul in its anguish gives itself up to just punishment must indeed be a state akin to the torture of the lost. Remorse is the torment of the damned.

The penalty of sin, moreover, is seen in the decay of the moral and spiritual powers of the soul. Spiritual organs that are unused die of atrophy. If the spiritual nature be disregarded and repressed, it fails to make an adequate response to spiritual stimulus and is finally dominated and possessed by the baser self. This law of the spiritual world accords with the laws of the world of nature. Nature has decreed that if an organ falls into disuse, it degenerates and is finally taken away. The arm unused or the limb which has become withered hangs as dead weight to the living body. Illustrations of this truth may also be gathered from the animal realm. The fish in Mammoth Cave are eyeless. Hav-

ing left light for darkness, and needing eyes no longer, they have lost them altogether. Nature too has taken revenge upon certain burrowing animals, such as the mole, which spend their lives beneath the surface of the ground, and has closed up their eyes. The mules also that are used in the mines of Russia lose in time the use of their eyes, because in those dark regions eyes are not required. An organ that is unused is a superfluous thing and is at last destroyed. As it is in the natural world so it is in the spiritual. The repression of the powers and faculties with which the soul is endowed results in the severance of their correspondence with the spiritual environment. Amid the call of the voice of God, the glorious revelations of His grace, and the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, the soul with its faculties shriveled may stand as unresponsive and impassive as the clay. Worse than the atrophy of limb or brain is the atrophy of the soul. As, according to Lord Morley, Voltaire had no ear to the finer vibrations of the spiritual voices, so there are many who, while they are able to hear with the outward ear, are wholly irresponsive to spiritual influences. In their preoccupation and self-absorption they are

utterly incapable of adding inward grasp to outward hearing or moral vision to outward seeing. Sin is accompanied by the loss of spiritual insight, by the perversion of the affections, by the corruption of the desires, and by the increasing cessation of the spiritual functions. "We talk about the sleep of death. How much deeper, how much sadder, is the sleep of life—the unresponsive heart, the unawakened mind, the hand palsied by lack of will to do!" Sin closes up the spiritual ears and puts out the spiritual eyes.

"Sin is the most expensive thing possible. It wastes money. It wears the body into decay. But, bad as these things are, there are even worse behind; for it blights the intellect and withers the moral nature of the man. It weakens the will; it blunts the conscience; it hardens the heart. It dries up all the finer feelings of the soul, so that ultimately all regard for truth and holiness and purity is gone. But worse yet. Sin is an enslaving thing. It becomes the master of the man who indulges in it. and sets him to the hardest drudgery."

What is true of the spiritual powers of man is also true of his physical powers. Sin not only debases and degrades the spiritual

nature, but it wastes and consumes the body. Sensual vices are punished in the deterioration and destruction of the physical organism. Through sin the body becomes weak, refuses to perform its proper functions, and becomes incapable of normal actions. Those who sin against the temperance and purity of the body are cast into a hell of physical punishment with its misery and degradation. Many a one sound of limb, strong of muscle, steady of nerve, and with rich blood coursing through his veins has by yielding to sensual vice become physically broken and cast as rubbish to the void. Drunkenness throws the nervous system into disorder and ultimately issues in disease and death. Pride, greed, and lust stamp their image and superscription upon the countenance and finally dissipate and destroy the powers of the soul. Sin wastes human resources, physical alike with spiritual.

One writer in speaking of a certain kind of sin says that "it is selfish, cruel, murderous. For a passing gratification of passion it will ruin a whole life's happiness and a household's peace. It dooms to lifelong degradation, disease, wretchedness, and early death a whole class of wretched women

in every city in the world. It spreads loathsome disease, bitter jealousy, blasting hatred through innocent hearts and otherwise happy homes. Nowhere does the pursuit of passing pleasure bring such a widespread harvest of enduring pain and shame."[27]

No just conception, however, of the penalty of sin can be formed unless we keep in mind the fact that the world is under law. Throughout the length and breadth of the universe law is at work. This is true for the physical order. There is no event in nature that is isolated. Cause and effect follow each other in unbroken succession. As every effect has its equivalent cause, so every cause has its equivalent effect. What is true for the physical universe is true for the moral world. The moral world is constituted and governed by law as is the world of nature. The processes of the spiritual realm are not less fixed and unalterable than are the processes of the physical realm. The law of cause and effect works with the same degree of exactness in the spiritual world as it does in the physical. The degrading effect of sin can no more be denied than the law of falling bodies can be denied. What is passing before our eyes in the world about us is not more inevitable than

are the laws and consequences which determine the development and destiny of the soul. Retribution is no accident or arbitrary infliction, but has its root deep in the nature of the universe and must work its way out in all the consequences of evil. The thoughts, words, and deeds of men are not lost but are bringing forth their equivalent effects in life and destiny. The evil deed returns to the evildoer. No one can escape the just penalty of sin. All wrongdoing must meet with a just and stern recompense. No guilty person can hide from a retributive justice. As the hunter is caught by the snare which he has set for the wild beast, so with the sinner. "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins."

"Be not deceived," says the inspired Word, "God is not mocked, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." The law thus enunciated by the apostle is as true in the life of the soul as it is in the field of business, the field of politics, or the wheat field. In a world of law it is utter folly to hope to reap other than we have sown. If we plant weeds, we shall reap weeds. If we sow to the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap corruption. Law must have its course, and, according to law,

the way of the transgressor is hard. The words of God through the Hebrew prophet are as true and eternal to-day as when first uttered. "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him." That the rich man lifted up his eyes in hell while the beggar was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom was as it should be. No power in the universe could have made it otherwise. God Himself could not have interfered with the laws of the moral universe so as to prevent the rich man from being cast into the place of torment or to shut the beggar out of heaven. Dives had neglected the simple humanities of life; he had neglected to feed the hungry beggar at his gates, and hell was the inevitable consequence of such a course of action. Every man will reap what he has sown. For the sinner hell is sure and inevitable. And the fires of hell burn as hot as ever. He who shuts his eyes to the light of God must walk in darkness. "God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

Thomas H. Huxley, though having never failed to proclaim his agnosticism concerning ultimate causality, states in a memorable

letter to Charles Kingsley some items of his creed concerning the nature and invitableness of the moral world which are worthy of more than ordinary attention. He says: "I have the firmest belief that the divine government is wholly just. The wicked does not flourish, nor is the righteous punished. The ledger of the Almighty is strictly kept, and every one of us has the balance of his operations paid over to him at the end of every moment of his existence." "The absolute justice of the system of things is as clear as any scientific fact. The gravitation of sin to sorrow is as certain as that of the earth to the sun, and more so—for experimental proof of the fact is within reach of us all; nay, it is before us in our lives, if we had but the eyes to see it." Another writer says: "We see no books, observe no management, and yet the numberless statements are made with as much exactness as if each one were superintended by a group of experts, combining more of knowledge and justice than are possessed by all of the mathematicians, scientists, thinkers, philosophers, and judges in the world."[28]

A boy emerging into young manhood and whose education was still unfinished was heard to say, "I will leave school and I will

become tough." A friend warned him of the dangers to which such a course would expose him and advised him to give up his evil purpose. To no avail was the warning. Chafing under the discipline of the school and the moral restraints of the home, he left school, ran away from home, and, in his own words, became "tough." The day of reckoning came sooner than he had expected. The harvest ripened early. His mother, overwhelmed with sorrow and grief because of his evil course, soon died of a broken heart. The father was reduced to poverty through the selling of his farm to pay the gambling debts which the son had incurred. The boy himself, having barely reached the state of young manhood, found himself as a result of his crimes a prisoner for life behind the prison bars. He had sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind. Men and women may, if they will, break moral law and lead vicious lives, but the day of reckoning comes. Penalty accompanies crime. Sin shall not go unpunished. The retributive consequences of sin work themselves out in suffering, sorrow, and death.

Something more! The effects of sin cannot be arrested, but go on through indefinite

ages. They follow down the years and pass out into an infinite universe with their deadly influence. Like the rings on the lake that circle from the sinking stone, so the effects of evil are felt far beyond the confines of human life. Like the light from the sun, which travels on and out, reaching different stars and systems years and centuries after it has left the central orb, so the consequences of sin travel out through time and space and can never be arrested in their onward course.

R. F. Horton in his work, How the Cross Saves, tells of one of the greatest Elizabethan poets, who, in his later life, as dean of Saint Paul's, was the most eloquent and powerful preacher of his day. It was observed that in his preaching and life there was always a vein of melancholy and sadness that seemed never to be relieved. The cause of this melancholy was due to the fact that in his early life he had written and published a volume of poems which was stained with the licentiousness of the time. These poems could never be recalled; they are still printed in every edition of English poetry; during the years they have been carrying moral taint and corruptness into the hearts of many readers. The Dean knew that he could not

undo what he had done; he knew that the streams of vice that he had turned loose into the lives of young men and women could never be stopped. It was the horror of this awful fact, that he could never cancel the evil done, and that as a writer of corrupting verse he would influence posterity perhaps even more than as a preacher of righteousness, that cast a dark shadow upon his life. That which we have compassed has not ceased to be. All that we have thought and wrought is not only bound up in the tissue of our own being, but is woven into the warp and woof of human life and will come back to us. The evil that we have committed is an eternal fact and goes coursing through the ages.

Every now and then some one comes forward with a proposition to abolish hell. Indeed, some declare that hell is a nonentity, while others tell us it is burned out. In some circles it has been thought necessary to officially repudiate the lake of fire and brimstone. It is true that the doctrine of hell which was accepted by the Christian Church for long centuries has by thinking people been wholly abandoned. It is not long since the impression was widespread that hell as a place of literal fire was one of the cardinal truths of

the Bible. Not a little of Christian preaching and teaching of even half a century ago centered about death, the judgment, heaven, and hell. The pulpit of yesterday described the torments of the lost in lurid colors. Against the sinner the wrath of God burned, the furnace was made hot, the flames raged and glowed, and the devils awaited the coming of the doomed and guilty soul. Even the degrees of punishment visited upon various classes of sinners were set forth with exactness and detail. Such preaching has almost if not altogether passed away. The minds of Christian worshipers are no longer harrowed with detailed descriptions of the suffering of lost souls. And it is well. It indicates that the pulpit is coming into a saner interpretation of the teachings of the New Testament and a truer appreciation of the ways of God with men. But this does not mean that belief in hell is being surrendered. It does not mean that hell is a nonentity. It means that the old notions that prevailed concerning the state of the lost have been banished. It means that the idea of material fire and physical suffering associated with hell has disappeared. Hell is as real and as horrible to-day as it has ever been. The conception of the nature of

hell has been changed, but belief in hell abides. You may change the name of the lake of fire and brimstone, but it is impossible to abolish it as an awful and terrible fact. Hell owes its existence to sin; as long as men sin so long will hell exist. Hell is not a place of torment prepared by God for men, as the old theologians used to tell us, but a state of mind and heart that the sinner must necessarily experience as a consequence of his wrong-doing. And the fires of hell will burn as long as free souls prefer self to God. So long as men reject God and choose darkness, so long will hell continue to be.

If we leave aside the question of the future state of the lost, we still are forced to believe that in this world the wicked suffer untold anguish. If we no longer believe in a lake of fire in the other world, in which the wicked are cast, we must confess that the state of the wicked in this life is one of torment. Sin is destructive. It is a hot and consuming fire. Everywhere and always it blights, weakens, and curses. Its penalty is seen in the physical, mental, social, and moral retribution which is being worked out in the world. It brings physical pain. It tortures and wastes the body. It torments the soul. It consumes

the powers of men. It undermines manhood and saps the spiritual energies. Everything that is beautiful and good withers and decays before its passions. It blackens and devours everything it touches. It destroys peace, and hope, and happiness. As the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by the fire which the Lord rained down from heaven, so men and women have been destroyed by sin.

Men and women, well born, splendidly endowed, capable and efficient, and with brilliant prospects of a successful and useful life, have through bad habits and sinful pleasure been defeated, broken, wrecked. Proud and noble families, boasting a glorious lineage and once famous for noble deeds, have through sin fallen from their high estate and have been made to lick the dust. Large and beautiful cities have because of licentiousness and deceit been literally wiped out of existence. Their names have become a byword among men. Rich and powerful nations have by going in the way of evildoers been destroyed from the face of the earth. The wrecks of individuals, families, cities, nations, strewn all along the pathway of history, bear eloquent and pathetic testimony to the truth that sin curses and ruins. "All sin is destruc-

tive. Not only the appetite of the drunkard and the lust of the depraved and the fever of the gambler, but all dishonesty, all selfishness, all pride and worldly ambition, all wrath and malice and envy, all evil thought are a fire shut up in the bones, tormenting the soul and consuming the life."

"Where there is greed there is privation; where there is corruption there is oppression; where there is lust there is anguish; where there is drunkenness there is misery; where there is falsehood there is distrust; where there is cruelty there is suffering; where there is pride there is despair; where there is ostentation there is heart-burning; where there is unkindness there are tears; in a word, where there is sin, there is punishment."[29]

It must not be overlooked that the penalty of sin is not confined to this world alone, but extends into the next; the results of sin in this life are revealed only in part. The world beyond alone will disclose the full consequences of evil. Ages upon ages must elapse before the full results of sin are seen. And the state of the soul after death will be conditioned by its state here. He that is filthy here will be filthy there. And there will be no loopholes of the law through which the sinner will

escape. No mistakes will be made. There will be no partiality on the part of the Judge. No technicalities will set aside the just operation of the law of God. No one can dodge results. Men shall reap as they sow.

Turning to the words of Christ and His apostles, we learn that the state of the lost is irrevocable. Those who die in rebellion against God are separated from the joys of heaven forever. The gulf is fixed between heaven and hell and no one can pass from the one side to the other. The wicked are cast into the outer darkness from which there is no escape. The tares are separated from the wheat and are burned in the fire. The fruitless tree is cut down and is no more allowed to cumber the ground. The wicked go away into everlasting punishment.

To be sure, there are some who tell us that the souls of the wicked will not continue forever, but will ultimately be destroyed. They who persistently pursue the way of sin will finally be blotted out of existence by God. The fate of the incorrigible is extinction. This theory of the final disposition of the wicked is called annihilation. The same theory appears, though in a different form, in the view that sin by its very nature is a

soul-destroying power. Sin of itself puts an end to the sinner's existence. In this case God does not annihilate the wicked; He leaves them to their own evil course, which by the operation of its own laws destroys the soul. In support of this view it is asserted that the "death" which the Scriptures declare to be the wages of sin is, primarily, extinction. Moreover, it is held that this doctrine is more in harmony with our conception of the character of God than that of the continuance of the rebellious. Dr. Tymms says that "a non-survival of inveterately wicked men would appear to our minds more congruous with the divine nature and purposes than the preservation of incurable sinners in conscious misery and persistent wickedness forever."

Others, again, hold out the "larger hope," and tell us that there might be a future probation for those who have not accepted Christ in this life. They assert that they see no reason to suppose that the final destiny of the wicked is fixed at death. Opportunity for moral choice and progress may be given in the future life as in this world. After death moral recovery may be possible to all those who repent of sin and turn to God in humble surrender and trust. Indeed, not a few go

so far as to declare that all souls, disciplined by the fires of sin, will some day return to the Father's house; that it matters not how far they have gone astray, or how deeply they have drunk of the cup of sin, they, having paid the full penalty of their transgressions, will ultimately turn and seek God's face and yield themselves to His will. The ground for such a hope lies in the divine goodness and equity.

Now, whatever our wish in the matter may be—and we do not hesitate to say that a burden would be lifted from the heart if we could say that it is so—we nevertheless must recognize that the Bible nowhere holds out any hope that the wicked will be annihilated either by God or by the power of their own sin, or that moral recovery is possible to those who pass into the other life in rebellion against the heavenly Father. Whatever facts, scientific or philosophical, men may bring forward to prove that death does not exclude moral change, the explicit teaching of Scripture seems to be that death marks the boundary of the day of grace for mankind. It appears from the words of Christ and His apostles that the sin of all who die unrepentant will be persistent and unending. After

death there seems to be no possibility of the recovery of the wicked to the state of holiness. As far as the New Testament is concerned, there is no end in sight to the penalty of lost souls. The sinner is cast into the outer darkness. The tares are burned in the fire. The gulf is fixed between the saved and the lost. The wicked go away into everlasting punishment. We must be content to leave the lost where the New Testament leaves them. If any change is possible for them, God alone knows it. At any rate, they are in the hands of a wise and loving Father, who has perfect knowledge of them and whose disposition of them all will be just and right.

It remains for us to discuss briefly the fact and nature of forgiveness. Of the fact of forgiveness we think that all are agreed. There is general agreement to the fact that God forgives the sinner and receives him into his favor. Forgiveness is a cardinal teaching of the Holy Scriptures. The language which the Bible puts into the mouth of God relative to forgiveness is clear and explicit. He has promised to blot out our transgressions and iniquities, to cast them behind His back, to forget them, to cast them into the depths of the sea. No longer will they come between

us and God to stop the flow of His mercy and love. And if forgiveness is a foundation truth of the Bible, it is also a fact of human experience. Men and women who have been at enmity with God and whose lives have been averse to His character have through repentance and faith obtained forgiveness of sin and have been received into the divine fellowship. Forgiveness is a glorious fact, a blessed reality.

Of the nature of forgiveness, however, there has not been such agreement of thought as there has been concerning its reality. No little confusion has arisen in the minds of many concerning what God does for the sinner when He pardons him and bestows upon him the blessings of His grace. It will therefore be necessary to inquire into the nature of forgiveness and set forth its essential features.

It must first be pointed out that forgiveness does not indicate any change in the attitude of God toward the sinner. Forgiveness does not mean, as some have held, the removal of anger on the part of God toward man, for there is no anger to be removed. Not a few theologians have told us that there existed an obstacle to forgiveness in God which had

to be taken away before He could exercise forgiving grace. But such a conception of God's relation to His creatures is wholly misleading. Jesus nowhere recognizes any barrier set up by God which must first be removed before He can pardon sin. God does not hold a grudge against man, nor has He withdrawn His grace; His attitude is ever an attitude of love. God loves the sinner, even though He is displeased with his sinful conduct. Like a true father who loves his child even when the child's behavior is abhorrent to him, so God loves His children even when their behavior is hateful to Him.

It must be recognized, however, that there are conditions of forgiveness on man's side. It is sin which prevents the operation of the divine mercy and grace. Sin is the sole cause of separation from God and the sole barrier to forgiveness. "Your sins," says the prophet, "have become a barrier between you and your God, and your iniquities have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear." And the sinner must repent of his sin and abandon his evil ways; he must realize and acknowledge his wrongdoing, must condemn and turn away from it. If the offender would be forgiven, he must break with the

evil that he has loved and with a sincere and true purpose identify himself with divine goodness and truth. If he would get right with the moral universe, he must go over to God's side and make the divine character his goal and standard. Like the prodigal, he must forsake the country of sin in which he has befouled his soul and wasted his substance and with penitence of heart return to his home and his Father.

"When we walk into the sunshine we do not give the sun anything, but place ourselves where it can give us something—light and heat, or brightness and warmth. So, when we put ourselves right with God by offering Him our hearts, we do not really give Him anything; but simply place ourselves in such a relation to Him that He can give us everything—light and love, and power and peace, and guidance and grace."[30]

According to the teaching of the Scriptures, the indispensable condition of forgiveness is penitence. No one can receive pardon from God who does not repent of the wrong he has done. True penitence is absolutely essential to reconciliation, to forgiveness, to harmony. The message of God to His chosen people was, "Repent, and turn yourselves

from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin." The words of Jesus to men were, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And God is pledged to forgive all who turn from the life of ingratitude and rebellion to the life of obedience and trust. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Whosoever has in his heart a sincere regret and sorrow for sin, and who turns from his evil way, may be assured of God's forgiving grace. Whosoever, convinced of the wrong and folly of his action and with a sense of defeat and failure upon him, breaks with his life of selfishness, finds in return the Father's house with its open door and waiting welcome. Penitence is the way that leads to God.

It must be noted, moreover, that forgiveness cannot bring back innocence or undo the guilty past. It cannot wholly annul penalty or make the past never to have been. It cannot at a stroke neutralize sin and its effects. The results which flow naturally from wrongdoing cannot in a day be stopped or set aside. What is written is written. The libertine, the gambler, the drunkard are not saved in a moment from the consequences of their misdeeds when they have been pardoned by God.

The spendthrift may be forgiven, but his wealth is squandered. The man who by a course of physical indulgence has undermined his health may receive God's forgiving favor, but his broken constitution remains. The prodigal, although received by the father's love and restored to all the blessings of sonship, carried with him through the years the evidence of his life of shame in a weakened body and dissipated resources. The same is true of the effects of sin upon others. Long after the sinner has obtained forgiveness and been delivered from the evil habits by which he has been enthralled, the consequences of his sinful life go right on to curse other people. He who by his evil life has plunged his friends or his family into misery and disgrace may obtain pardoning grace, but he cannot cancel the ills he has wrought by his wrongdoing. Nor can the memory of sins committed be blotted out. Even he who has obtained pardon, and who is united to God by filial trust and love, is ofttimes cast into the fiery Gehenna of remorse and shame by the remembrance of his misdeeds. Nor does the sinner wholly recover from his moral deterioration which the soul has suffered through a course of evil conduct. Sin leaves

its scars in the moral life which are with the greatest difficulty and often never wholly effaced.

"In so far as sin has wrought certain effects in the sinner, these remain as things to be recovered from. It is vain for any man to sin and to think that by his repentance and God's forgiveness it will, at once, be to him as though he had never sinned. The drunkard who repents must long resist temptation, which habit has made strong, and must place himself under remedial influences before he will recover from the effects of his drunkenness. The unclean man who is morally degraded and who repents must travel a long road of resistance of evil and of moral purification before he will rise to the height of moral purity. But forgiveness is the pledge of divine favor, and to the height of purity every forgiven soul of man will at last come. God, who forgives, does not thereby abrogate His law but affirms it. He does not remove all consequences of sin at once, but He places the sinner under such gracious and remedial influences as will restore him and give him both moral sanity and sanctity through loving obedience to law."[31]

It will therefore be seen that, while forgive-

ness does not cancel the effects of sin, laws are introduced which counteract their working. Forgiveness is in itself a gradual process. As the penalty of sin is not something externally attached, but the just and inevitable consequences of wrongdoing, forgiveness sets in operation remedial agencies. As returning health eliminates disease and restores the body to a normal state, so by virtuous living the evil consequences of sin may in part be eliminated and moral recovery attained. The wounds that sin has made may be gradually healed. The evil effects of wrongdoing entailed upon the sinner, and which continue far beyond the point of divine pardon, may to no slight extent be cut off. Forgiveness does not bring back to the sinner his former virtue, but it gives him a new start. It puts him where God's mercy and grace cooperate with him in the working out of a better future.

Thus forgiveness is a new start. It is the road which leads from the guilty past to a new experience and a new life. It is a new opportunity to begin life again and to enter upon a future that shall be dominated by feelings of love and good will to God and man. It is the beginning of right personal relations

with the heavenly Father and denotes the entrance into life-fellowship with Christ. It signifies the welcome of the Father to the disobedient, but now repentant son, the admission of him into the rightful place in the home. It is the restoration of the sinner to the family of God, to His favor, to the enjoyment of His love. God in dealing with the individual now overlooks the sin that he has done in as far as it has any effect on the divine conduct. His attitude to him is no longer determined by His condemnation of his sin, but is determined by feelings of benevolence and grace. The effects of sin do not wholly cease, nor does God cease to know the sin or the effects which flow therefrom, but it no longer determines His feeling and action. "To forgive," says Clarke, is to say to one who has done wrong, "I do not think of you or feel toward you as one who has done this; I do not hold it in my heart against you; I leave it out of my thoughts so that it does not embarrass the relation between you and me; it is between us as if it had not been."[32] Divine pardon, therefore, denotes the cessation of God's displeasure on account of the sinful past and the reception of the sinner to a life of gracious fellowship.

The fact and nature of forgiveness are nowhere taught more clearly or more strikingly in the Sacred Scriptures than in the parable of the prodigal son, which was spoken by Jesus. It was Jesus who revealed the Father's love and forgiveness as we see it revealed nowhere else. It was He who gave us the brightest and most attractive presentation of the Father. So deeply impressed was Horace Greeley with the magnitude of this parable that he declared that if the whole Bible were lost with the exception of this story there would be enough of truth in it to save the world. In this parable Christ portrays God not as a stern and relentless Judge but as a loving Friend who stands ready to receive and forgive. The son leaves home. He turns his back on the father's house. He goes into the far country. He wastes his substance in riotous living. He plays the fool and associates with harlots. In all this, however, he is followed by the father's compassion and good will. Although he has befouled his soul and sacrificed his manhood on the altars of lust, he does not pass beyond the bounds of the parental love and thought. The father thinks often of his wayward boy and with the rising and setting

of every sun he stands at the door of the ingle with his eyes turned toward the distant hills. His slumbers at night are broken with dreams of his lost son. And when the prodigal, contrite of heart, forsakes his evil ways and with swift feet returns to his father, he is received with open arms and a rapturous welcome. Indeed, the father anticipates the return and goes out to meet him. "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." That, says Jesus, is God. That is the pitiful heart of the loving Father. That is the great and good God, who in loving tenderness receives the returning sinner, pardons the guilty past, and reinstates him into His favor. To be forgiven is to be put in harmonious relations with God.

CHAPTER VI

FAITH AND REASON

The peculiar faculty of the Christian religion is faith; Christianity is essentially a religion of faith in God and in His Son Jesus Christ. Faith is the first step to the spiritual life. It is the initial act of salvation in the soul and is also the means by which the life of the soul is sustained and perfected. While love has been declared to be the greatest thing in the world, faith may be said to be the first. Indeed, in a sense, faith is greater than love, for faith is the source from which love springs. In our union with Jesus Christ faith has the priority, for it is only as we believe in Him that we can love and obey Him. As the tree is nourished by the root, and has no life or beauty if severed therefrom, so "love has no power to branch out and bear fruit, except as, through faith, it is rooted in Christ and draws nourishment from Him."

"Faith may be defined as the sense of the

unseen which detects, recognizes, loves, and trusts the goodness existing in numerous forms and persons in the world, and rises to its height in trusting Him who is its source and sun." Faith is that faculty of the soul which lays hold on those spiritual facts whose reality cannot be attested by the senses or demonstrated by the reason and perceives them as real. It is a trust in God and in His divine care; it is the sympathetic response of the soul to the divine love and goodness in whatever form it may be manifested. It is an intrusting of ourselves to God's saving grace as revealed in the person and character of Jesus our Saviour. It is union with Christ, entrance into fellowship of life with Him. Faith in Christ is a clinging to Him, a spiritual adhesion, a self-committal of the heart and mind to His divine will. By this spiritual sense we partake of His spirit and become one with Him in fellowship and love. Faith thus becomes the living link which unites man to God. It is that act which binds the soul to Christ in sincere preference and aspiration for the life which He bids us live.

It will thus be seen that faith is not a mere intellectual assent to the revelation which the Bible gives concerning the nature of God

and His purposes among men. It is not a passive acquiescence in the teachings of Jesus or in what the Scriptures say concerning His life and death. It is not simply a belief that Christ was the Son of God, that He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. This coldly intellectual way of recognizing historical facts is alien altogether to the evangelical idea of faith. Faith which is merely an assent of the understanding to truth instead of a surrender of the life to God is a barren and unfruitful thing. One may accept as true all that the Bible teaches concerning God and Jesus Christ, he may accept as revealed truth the entire contents of the Holy Scriptures and meanwhile be devoid of effective faith. One may assent to the truth of the sinfulness of man, the rich and free provision made for his salvation, and nevertheless know not of that mystical union between the soul and its Saviour which faith effects. In Simon Magus we have one who possessed this intellectual disposition, but who was still in bondage to sin. To the teachings of the apostles he gave a ready assent, and even received baptism at the hands of Philip. As the Samaritans had been bewitched with his sorceries, so he in turn was amazed at the

miracles wrought by the apostles. But such a faith possessed no ethical or spiritual value. It led to no conviction of heart, no repentance, no trustful committance of the self to the will of God. It was wholly powerless to produce within him that repentance that worketh godliness. He was still in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. Thus faith is more than an intellectual acceptance of the truth which God has given to man in the Old and New Testaments. While it presupposes the intellectual elements, the recognition of the existence of God, the guilt of sin, the need of inward purity, the truth of all the great redemptive facts proclaimed in the gospel, it meanwhile is more than such a recognition. It is a temper and attitude of the soul. The faith that saves is a practical surrender of ourselves in trust and love to the divine purposes as revealed to us by the gracious life of Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is the free and complete committal of the mind and heart to the ever living Son of God. It is the intrustment of ourselves in loving obedience to God, the heavenly Father.

The word "faith" is one which bulks large in the writings of the New Testament. It is one of the cardinal words of the Gospels. It

was a word that was constantly in the thought and on the lips of Jesus Christ. The earthly life of our Lord has been called a school of faith and He Himself a teacher of the art of faith. He was always looking for faith in those who came to Him for assistance, and He ever sought to excite faith in the hearts of those in whom it was lacking. Jesus taught that no one can live without faith. The basal fact underlying His teaching and preaching, His miracles and healing, was that we are saved by faith.

If the word "faith" is a cardinal one in the Gospels, it is no less so in the letters and epistles of Paul. Paul dwells upon faith with unfailing insistence; it is the most prominent word in his writings. While the preaching of Paul was not confined exclusively to the doctrine of faith, while it took wide range and covered all aspects of Christian living, yet, however broad the apostle's vision and however catholic his sympathies, his gospel was one of repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. According to the apostle, faith is the one indispensable condition of union with Christ. It is both the condition of entrance into spiritual life and the means by which the soul grows in knowledge and grace.

And faith is a living trust in Christ, a devoting ourselves to Him, the opening of our hearts to His divine presence.

According to the teachings of the New Testament, the object of faith is Jesus Christ. While the gracious Father is the source of all good, the particular object of faith is Jesus the personal Saviour, who ministers to the needs of the soul. And it is fitting that Christ should be the object of faith, for He is the Lord of life and the Redeemer of men. This fact, however, has not always been kept in mind. Indeed, there is a tendency to deny the claims of the Divine Son and to depose Him from His enthronement in the human heart. Harnack, in The Essence of Christianity, asserts that the faith that Jesus preached was faith of which He was not the object but God. The faith which He sought to excite in the souls of men was directed toward the Father and not toward Himself. This, however, is not strictly the case; it fails to do justice to the true relation of Christ to believers. Jesus ever sought to direct the faith of men toward Himself; He taught them that they must believe in and receive Him ere they can become members of the heavenly kingdom. Numerous are the facts

which may be cited from the Gospels in proof of this claim. To Philip, one of the twelve, who desires to see God and who says to Jesus, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us," Jesus replies, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In seeing Jesus we see the gracious Father. And faith in God must be faith in His Son, who is the express image of His person and the brightness of His glory. To the unbelieving Jews who did not receive Him, Jesus says, "Ye also have seen me and believe not." As He was the revelation of God to man, failure to believe in Him was failure to believe in God. In many places He could do no mighty works because of unbelief. Even His power to make whole the body was limited by the lack of faith in those who came to Him to be healed. To those who asked, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" He replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." In the upper room on the night preceding His crucifixion He pleaded with His disciples to have faith in Him, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." He administered a rebuke to those who were slow of heart in receiving the things the Scriptures had spoken concerning Himself: "O fools,

and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Moreover, those who had rejected Christ had rejected the word of God and had brought upon themselves the reproach that fell from His lips: "Ye have not his word abiding in you, for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not."

Besides, not a few instances are recorded in the Gospels where faith is directed toward Jesus by those who came to Him seeking assistance. This is true in the case of the Syrophœnician woman who approached Jesus beseeching Him to have mercy on her daughter who was grievously vexed with a devil. Jesus, desirous of testing her faith, sought to put her aside by declaring that He was not sent save unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This act of Christ, however, instead of causing the woman to lose hope, quickened her faith and called forth from her needy heart such an expression of belief that it was rewarded with the words: "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Similarly, when a centurion at Capernaum came to Christ beseeching Him to heal his servant, who was sick of the palsy, Jesus expressed His willingness to go and heal him. This willingness on the part of

Christ to go to the centurion's home to heal the palsied servant elicited from the centurion the response that Jesus was able to heal the servant with a word. At this exhibition of faith in His power to heal Jesus marveled and said to them that followed, "Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Again, the father of the demoniac boy, finding the disciples unable to heal his son, appealed to Christ for help as he met Him descending from the mount of transfiguration. Overcome with doubt and despair, he approaches Jesus with the appeal, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." Being reminded by Jesus that all things are possible to them that believe, his faith in the healing power of Christ struggles against and overcomes his doubt and triumphantly he exclaims, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

> What is the point where He himself lays stress?
> Does the precept run "Believe in good,
> In justice, truth, now understood
> For the first time"?—or "Believe in me
> Who lived and died, yet essentially
> Am Lord of Life"?

"True faith," says Luther, "is that assured trust and firm assent of heart, by which

Christ is laid hold of, so that Christ is the object of faith. Yet he is not merely the object of faith; but in the very faith, so to speak, Christ is present. Faith lays hold of Christ, and grasps him as a present possession, just as the ring holds the jewel." The faith which saves from sin and unites the soul to God is the commitment of the life to Jesus Christ. It is the living and loving surrender of the heart and will to the Divine Lord.

To be sure, Jesus sought no exaltation of Himself which was not in perfect accord with His filial relation to the Father. If Jesus is the object of faith in the gospel, it is because He is the well-beloved Son in whom God is well pleased. If men are urged to believe in Him, it is because He has come from the Father to reveal His love and good will. If Jesus presented Himself to men as the One in whom they should believe, it was because He was one with God in His purposes. His miracles of healing, His words of teaching, His loving service, His holy character were an expression of the heart and mind of God. His entire life accorded with that of the heavenly Father, for He said, "He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." Thus

it is because Christ is God's Son and representative and the embodiment of the divine message to the world that He is set forth as the object of faith. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

If faith is more than an intellectual assent to the reality of God and things spiritual, it is also more than a passive receptiveness. Faith is more than an attitude of the mind; it is more than trust; it is the whole process of guiding and forming the life in accord with the spirit and principles of Jesus. Faith is an active, not a passive, virtue; it is a living impulse, a creative energy. It is not merely something that we possess but something that possesses us and works itself out in spiritual achievement. Faith is aspiration and choice; it is the forward look, the inner vision of the invisible and the spiritual. It is the will to do the will of God as it is revealed to us by His Son, our Lord. It is the preference and choice of the ideals of Jesus, a conviction of the reality and value of the type of life which is set before us in the gospel. It is a sincere and eager desire to be like Christ, to possess His Spirit, to live in conformity with His truth. Faith embraces the will as well as the emotions and issues into a life that is domi-

nated by holy impulses and righteous endeavor.

The biologist tells us that the leaf of the plant is covered with tiny mouths, similar in form to human lips, which seize the carbonic acid gas in the air and transmute it into the leaf. So by faith the soul lays hold on spiritual realities and transmutes them, glorious and beautiful, into its own life. Faith is "an active putting out of the hand to take the thing that is freely given to us of God. We have to open our hearts, and then the river flows in; we have to open our eyes, and then the light smites upon and gladdens the pupil. We have to dilate our lungs, and then the air goes to invigorate the blood and to give life. We have to unite ourselves to Jesus Christ by the act—for it is an act—of trust, in which a man's will is more concerned than his head. We have to unite ourselves to Jesus Christ by the act of trust, and then into the open heart there comes the flow of that Divine fullness. We receive by faith. We receive him."[33]

According to the marginal reading of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, as given in the revised New Testament, faith is the "giving substance to things hoped for." Faith is the

realization of hope; it is hope realizing itself in holy living. The man of faith is he who gives substance to his hopes by directing his life toward righteous ends. If we hope to be saved from sin, to be cleansed of evil passions, to be united with Christ in fellowship and love, and begin to realize such a hope, that is faith. If we hope to build into ourselves the mind of Jesus, to enter into a life of moral beauty, to render helpful service to our fellows, and set about to actualize such a hope, that is faith. Faith gives substance to things hoped for. Faith in the heavenly Father means that the believer commits his way to the divine care and daily works with God in the building up of His divine kingdom. Faith in the cross of Christ means that the old desires and passions have been crucified and that a new spirit with love as the ruling passion has been created within. Faith in the resurrection of Jesus means that the man of sin has died and that the soul is daily emerging from entombment to fullness of life and power. Faith in prayer means that by daily fellowship with the Invisible new visions of God are gained and new strength received for the duties of each new day. Faith in heaven means that the light

and life of God have become a living possession and that the soul finds its highest joy in things eternal.

"Our Lord Christ puts the emphasis on believing, not as a thing in itself, but as something that leads to life. So Jesus Christ preached the need of belief only as belief was to issue in life. He did not want a creed that is simply a fine-spun philosophy. He did not want hairbreadth distinctions in theology. What he wanted was a right attitude toward the truth; not a doctrine insisted upon for its own sake, but a right faith as leading to a right life; not a creed to be crammed down men's throats, but a creed which we translate into life. Belief is not a bare acceptance of facts; it is an atmosphere; it surrounds us; we live in it; we breathe it. It is a real faith only when it becomes the background of all our thought. It must give color to all our actions. Everything we do must be different because of it. It must make us do what otherwise we would not do. It is not dogma; it is life."[34]

The nature of faith is beautifully illustrated in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, in which is given the muster roll of the army of the faithful. Here we find a hearty com-

mitment of the soul and life to spiritual though unseen realities. Here we find an absolute and unwavering reliance on the divine promises. Here we find a greeting of the promises from afar and a trustful recognition of a future yet to be revealed. This is seen in Noah, who, warned of God of the impending flood, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. This is seen in Abraham, who, called of God to go into a country that he knew not of, obeyed and became the father of the faithful. This is seen in Jacob, who when dying bestowed his blessing upon his sons, believing that ultimately the chosen race would go up and possess the promised land. This is seen in Moses, who endured as seeing Him who is invisible and became the liberator of his people. This is seen in all the Old Testament worthies, who by faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, quenched the power of fire, turned to flight armies of aliens. With a prophetic insight into the history of Israel, the author of the epistle "reminds his correspondents that their national glory never came from their kings and warriors, their wise men or wealthy, but from men like themselves, of heroic faith, men who never got

what they hoped for, but always got something much better and were never disappointed with God; men who preferred wandering in dens and caves of the earth rather than cease believing in the better things promised."

It must be borne in mind that faith is not peculiar to religion; it is one of the commonest and most-used faculties of the human mind. Indeed, there is no faculty which is put to more constant use than that of faith. When we talk of faith we are dealing with an inner impulse which we all use in all the ordinary methods of thought and usual modes of action. All living proceeds by the operation of this principle. We live by faith. It is faith that puts thoughts and ideals into practice. Faith rules the world. All progress in every field of human activity is brought about by acts of faith. Our knowledge of and our mastery over nature have been gained by faith. The world's great achievements in invention and science and discovery and business have been accomplished by men who have believed. Faith furnishes the explanation of the tireless devotion and patient enthusiasm of all those in all walks of life who have worthily achieved

and entered into the fruits of a heroic service. It lies at the root of all successful undertakings in industry and commerce. The successful merchants and business men of all lands and of all times have been those who possessed vision and who walked by faith. Indeed, lack of faith in the various fields of human endeavor is fatal to all high success. He who lacks faith in himself, in his opportunity, in his enterprise is defeated in advance. It is because men have believed in the possibilities in mine, in forest, in field, and have seized them, that they have created great fortunes and built up industries of large girth. These are the men who have become the financiers, the railroad magnates, the captains of industry, the leaders in the business world. While men of uncertainty and doubt have hesitated, the men of faith have accumulated vast wealth and risen to positions of influence and power.

What is true for the world of business is also true for the realm of science. The progress of science during the centuries has been due as much to faith as it has been to careful investigation and painstaking industry. The men who have wrung from nature her secrets and who have brought her laws under control

have been, first of all, men of faith. Professor Shaler says: "It is indeed safe to say that any general truth in science has been known to the discoverer before it appeared in the facts as critically verified." More than half a century ago Emerson wrote: "Every known fact in natural science was divined by the presentiment of somebody before it was actually verified." In 1870 Mr. Tyndall delivered a lecture before the British Association at Liverpool the caption of which was "Scientific Use of the Imagination." What is this but faith? It is but faith outstripping and running ahead of experience. Where sense experience stops faith takes up the task and pushes out into regions yet to be explored. Faith lays hold upon the territory which lies outside the realm of the senses, stakes its boundaries, notes its contents, and invites thought to take possession of it. Faith stands on the edge of the known and looks out into the vast spaces of the unknown, makes an excursion in those unexplored regions and brings back reports of that heretofore unknown country. Thus faith is a sort of advance guard, blazing the way and marking out the road over which experience must later travel. It outstrips the

senses and discovers new realms of truth that are waiting to be explored and controlled.

Life, therefore, is lived, not according to logical necessity and formal proof, but in obedience to faith. Faith is, as we have seen, more than a theological term; it is a word of wide application and covers all aspects of life. "The just shall live by faith" is a truth that holds not only in the realm of religion, but in every realm of human activity. It is as fundamental in the fields of science and mechanical achievement as it is in matters of religion. It has given us all our schools and hospitals, our crafts and industries, our arts and laws. It lies at the base of all our intercourse with our fellows, all our undertakings, all our institutions. Life without faith in men and things would be a barren and desert waste, yielding neither blossom, nor flower, nor fruit.

Now, faith in God and in His Son Jesus Christ is exactly what faith in things and men is. As when we invest energy and skill in some business or scientific enterprise, convinced of the success of such an undertaking, we have faith, so when we link ourselves to the purposes of God, convinced that they will bring about our moral and spiritual well-

being, we have faith. As when we accept the words of men and act on them we exhibit faith, so when we accept the words of Christ and act on them we possess faith. Drummond says: "So far as I can see, there is only one way in which faith is got, and it is the same in the religious world as it is in the world of men and women. I learn to trust you, my brother, as I come to know you. I watch you, I live with you, I find out that you are trustworthy, and I come to trust myself to you, and lean upon you." So when we believe that God will keep His promises and do for us what He has said He would we have faith in Him.

And it must not be overlooked that as those who in science and business have wrought lasting good and written their names deep on the page of time have been men of faith, so those who have wrought nobly in the moral history of the race have been men who have had unflinching faith in the spiritual and the unseen. The noblest spirits of earth have been they who counted not their lives, their families, their possessions dear unto them for the sake of implicit obedience to God. Such a one was Abraham, who, with supreme faith in Jehovah, dared to leave his kindred and

his father's house and to go into a land that God had promised to show him. It was a daring venture, but he made no mistake. God kept His word. In due time he came into possession of a new land, a land of material and spiritual blessing. The names of Abraham's contemporaries have sunk into oblivion, but his name shines with a luster that grows brighter with the passing centuries. Indeed, the farther he recedes into the past the greater does he seem to be. Through the ages he has been called the father of the faithful, and such he will be to the end of time. Such a man was Paul, who, obedient to the heavenly vision and with a profound faith in the cross of Christ, went out to free men from the thrall of sin and to sow the seeds of a new civilization. Such a man was Luther, who, hearing the voice, "The just shall live by faith," cast aside the weapons of penance and good works and arose to become the liberator of the nations and the creator of the modern age. Such a man was Wesley, who, rejecting the forms and rites of a dead ceremonialism, proclaimed a gospel that stayed the tides of worldliness and vice and gave rise to a regenerated England. "All these noble lives were made noble because a

starry hope, visible only to the eye of faith, was the guiding star for each of them."

The question here arises, What is the relation of faith to reason? Is an intellectual understanding of God, of His saving grace, and of the life eternal essential to faith, or is it wholly unnecessary? Is faith rooted in knowledge or is it independent of the operations of thought? It has been assumed by some that faith and reason are in conflict with each other, that they cannot dwell together in the bonds of unity. It is said that the function of the intellect lies wholly outside the limits of religion; faith alone has authority within the realm of the spiritual life. Some have held that if religion is to flourish, the reason must be dethroned; if the heart is to be exalted, the head must be degraded. One writer, in an article which speaks slightingly of the office of the reason in religion, asserts that "not intellect, not genius, not power of understanding, but love and filial trust can find out the hiding place of God." Again, he says, "The Holy Scriptures are full of faith, and exalt it to the highest place, while reason is not largely dwelt upon." It will, we think, be readily seen that this is but a partial statement of the facts and greatly needs to be

modified and corrected. Jesus says, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." In the following lucid manner Dr. Charles E. Jefferson draws attention to the prevailing tendency of opposing faith and reason: "The impression has gotten abroad that faith and reason are opposed to each other; that both cannot flourish in the same man at the same time; that if a man wants to be a man of faith, he must not think deeply, and that if he gives free rein to his reason, it is likely to go hard with his faith. In many a circle it is taken for granted that if a man becomes a Christian, he must allow his mind to be shackled, and that if he wishes to think freely and follow the truth withersoever it may lead him, he had better not attach himself to the Church."[35] Among the theologies, Ritschlianism denies to the reason its legitimate exercise, and holds that if a doctrine be shown to be rational, it at once ceases to be Christian.

It may not be amiss to state that this conception of the relation of faith to reason had its origin in the Christian Church of the Middle Ages. The mediæval Church held that the subject-matter of religion had been given to it by an infallible revelation and was con-

sequently absolute and unquestioned. "Do not think," but "believe," was the maxim that the Church of the Middle Ages laid down in the guidance of Christian believers in matters of religion. And the Church claimed that it possessed not only religious truth but truth in all fields of knowledge, such as philosophy, science, and history. The faculty by which religious truth is perceived is faith; faith not only precedes but is independent of the exercise of the reason. To gain a knowledge of the truth it is altogether unnecessary to call in the aid of thought, since we believe in order that we may know. The duty of the believer, therefore, is to accept with all sincerity the teachings of the Church, whether they are seen to harmonize with the demands of reason or not. Should we succeed in showing that Christian dogma receives the sanction of thought, so much the better; should we not so succeed, we must not thereby be disquieted since the reason possesses no authority in religious experience. The most that the intellect can in any case do is not to apprehend truth, but to show that Christian doctrine and the objects of faith which have been authoritatively received are intelligible and self-consistent. Indeed, the more mys-

terious and dark a thing appears to be, the greater is the claim that is laid upon the heart of the believer. Said Lord Bacon: "The more incredible anything is, the more honor I do God in believing it." Even Augustine, the father of Catholic orthodoxy, is reported to have said, "I should not believe the gospel, did not the authority of the Catholic Church move me thereto."

This conception of the relation of faith to reason is a mischievous notion and must be abandoned. To degrade knowledge in order to exalt faith is pernicious and must result only in moral and spiritual disaster. A faith which seeks to maintain itself apart from the light of the reason is a blind impulse and finally perishes. Nourished in such a soil faith can produce naught but rank weeds which spread disease and death. Unless the spiritual life be built upon a foundation of which the reason approves, it cannot endure, but will at the first approach of doubt or persecution be shaken and destroyed. A religion which denies to the mind its rightful place in the development of the spiritual life is one which cannot long hold sway over the hearts and consciences of men. Knowledge, and not ignorance, is the fit atmosphere of faith.

They, therefore, who seek to divorce faith from the intellect are foes, and not friends, of the Christian religion. And it is along that way that the destruction and overthrow of faith lies. Indeed, the soul can commit itself to One alone whom it knows to be able and willing to satisfy its aspirations and needs. Religion thus puts no shackles upon the mind, but allows it to move with perfect freedom. And religious truth not only lies within the realm of the intellect, but is among the richest deposits of knowledge. The strongest faith, the deepest trust, the tenderest love are linked with the freest exercise of thought. Indeed, the distinction between the lowest and the highest forms of religion is due to the loftier conception of the object of worship which the latter implies. The production of the highest moral character in the individual and the accomplishment of the greatest moral ends in life are brought about only as faith is rooted in a worthy knowledge of the nature and will of Him whom it trusts and obeys. Those who confide most implicitly in God and who render Him the greatest service are those who know Him best. Thus faith, like a climbing plant, entwines itself around the tree of knowledge, adding strength to beauty.

It will, accordingly, be seen that faith and reason are not in conflict with each other, but are complemental in the religious life. Faith is not divorced from but is rooted in knowledge, especially a knowledge of God and salvation. Faith is not a disposition to shut one's eyes to the day and to walk blindly in the dark, but is a faculty which operates under the light of reason. It springs not from credulity and mental blindness, but flourishes best in a soil prepared by inquiry and thought. It is built upon the ground of evidence, and it anticipates and invites proof. And this is the conception of faith which, we think, is everywhere set forth in the Bible. In the Bible faith and reason are never opposed to each other, but are inseparably joined. Faith in God and in His Son Jesus Christ is nowhere asked for except as sufficient reasons are given for such belief. Christ never appealed to a faith which knew nothing or was ignorant of the purposes of God and His ways concerning men. The command to repent and believe the gospel comes only to those who have already heard the good tidings of salvation. "I know him whom I have believed" is the language of the Christian religion. To Christian believers Paul

says: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Again he says, "Test all things, hold fast that which is good." "Be ready always," says Peter, "to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." Again he exclaims, "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge." In a similar manner the apostle John exhorts believers: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." Moreover, the lesson which the Bible everywhere teaches is that the spiritual leaders of Old and New Testament times, the men of faith, were men of intellectual greatness and strenuous action. Supported by a spiritual insight, they were ever ready to give a reason for the faith they possessed. "The men of whom Scripture history especially predicates faith are the intellectual and moral giants of history, the men who were virile and strongly chivalrous enough to make long excursions into the region of truth and to move out in a large and telling way upon the field of action."

It must, however, be kept in mind that while faith rests on intellectual convictions

it must be freed from the senses. Sight, and not reason, is the antithesis of faith. We walk by faith, not by sight; true faith cannot be in bondage to sight and touch. Faith operates even when the senses are unable to attest the reality which faith grasps. In the days of Jesus there were those who through dullness of spiritual vision desired to bring spiritual realities to the test of the physical senses. They refused to believe in the realm of the spiritual and the unseen because no physical proof had been given of its reality. There was a disposition to apply sight to that which by its very nature was invisible. It was such examples of unbelief as these that were the despair of the life of Jesus and that called forth from His lips words of reproach. To such He said, "Ye will not believe except ye see signs and wonders." Even Thomas failed to believe in the resurrection of Jesus because he could not test it by the senses, and put his finger into the nail prints and his hand into the pierced side. And though he afterward believes on his Lord when He appears to him in person, he fails of the blessing pronounced by Christ on those who believe even when no sensible proof is given, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet

have believed." "Faith sees something which the eye does not see. Faith is not irrational, but it perceives a transcendent truth, over beyond that which the sense perceives. Faith is always intermixed with hope and with a great expectation, either with a hope because it sees something which is not yet, but will be, or else with a hope because it sees something which is not yet seen, but will be seen."[36]

CHAPTER VII

THE BIRTH FROM ABOVE

The birth from above, the beginning of the spiritual life, may be defined as a fundamental spiritual change in the soul of man which is accompanied by the soul's personal union and fellowship with Christ. The new birth is the change wrought in the heart when, through repentance and faith, it forsakes the ways of sin and receives the Divine Spirit and life. It is the begetting in man of a new mind and disposition, a new character and likeness to God. With the rise of this spiritual experience new affections are created and a new love for all that is pure and good is implanted within. A new bias is given to the heart and will, the desires and motives, and the soul is brought into a new relation—a relation of trust and love to God. The birth from above lies "in a certain mind, in a certain ruling motive, in a certain trend of character, in a certain obedience of will, in a certain passion for goodness."

The birth from above is set forth in the New Testament under various terms and figures. By Saint Paul it is described as a quickening, a divine giving of life (Eph. 2. 1-13); a putting off the old man and a putting on the new man (Eph. 4. 22-24); a renewing in the spirit of the mind (Eph. 4. 23); a circumcision of the heart (Rom. 2. 28, 29); a "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh" (Col. 2. 11); "the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3. 5); being "alive from the dead" (Rom. 6. 13); being spiritually minded (Rom. 8. 6); being God's workmanship (Eph. 2. 10); being "created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4. 24); being "a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5. 17). Peter describes it as a calling out of darkness into marvelous light (1 Pet. 2. 9); a partaking of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1. 4); a spiritual resurrection (1 Pet. 1. 3); while John compares it with the work of God in the resurrection of the dead: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will" (John 5. 21).

It will be seen that this inward and spiritual change is thoroughgoing. It goes to the

bottom of things. It affects the central citadel of man's being. It is no surface transformation, but a renewal and regeneration of the inner motives and character. This change is no mere reform or the working over of old material, but the creation of something new. It is the bringing into existence of a new creature. It is a work wrought not upon man but in him. Regeneration is the reconstruction and reorganization of the whole life from an entirely different point of view to that of the ordinary person; it involves all that is implied in the transition from natural to spiritual. He who possesses the life from above is not a revised edition of the old man, but a new creation, a new man who has committed himself to new interests, new ideals, a new outlook, a new direction. The old desires and passions are removed and new thoughts and affections are enkindled. In the affectional nature a renewal is wrought and the soul is infilled with the life of God.

It must not be overlooked that the birth from above does not add to or take from man's mental powers or faculties. No new faculty arises, nothing is added to the powers of the soul. No new rational or moral constitution is given in regeneration. No new

personality is created; the identity of the self remains as before. The new life is due, not to any new substance or gift, but to a new tendency in the entire being. The change within the heart which we call regeneration is not a change in the essential nature of man, but a change in the moral quality of his motives and dispositions. It is the illumination and moral quickening of the soul by the eternal Light. A new content is given to the affections and a new direction to the will. Man's love, which before was self-centered, is now centered in God and things divine. The powers of the soul which before were set toward self and sin are now set toward God and righteousness. A new life is begun in which love becomes the ruling disposition.

One writer speaks of the change wrought in his own personal experience in the following manner: "I know that through Christ and the mediation of His cross there occurred a great change in my mind and heart, in my motives and character, and in my life. It was not the dawn of a new light only. It was not merely the inrush of new ideas. In point of fact, there was no new light, no new ideas. All that became real, moving, uplifting had been known to me from my boyhood. It was

a new relation to God. The new relation was a new birth issuing, though feebly and blunderingly, into a new life. It had no one definite hour, though it had its period of time. It was not merely a month or two of emotion, a time of quickened but transient vision. It was a permanent work at the center of my moral being."[37]

The new creation is of God. The new-born man is born from above. He is the product not of natural but of supernatural processes. The new life in man is divine in its origin. In the realm of the spiritual, as in the realm of the physical, spontaneous generation is a heresy. Science assures us that in the natural realm life can be derived only from life. In the world of nature no life can spring up spontaneously from the soil. Life arises only through some antecedent life. If the germ of life be lacking, no quickening power, such as rain or sunshine, can cause it to appear. What is true for the lower forms of life is true for the higher forms. The life of the soul arises from antecedent life. It is brought about not by education, culture, art, or social reform, but by the touch of the Divine Spirit upon man. It is by contact with the Spirit of God that the new affections are

born, the new dispositions implanted, and the new character begun. To Nicodemus our Lord says that he must be born from above. The physical life is earthly in its source, the spiritual life is from heaven. It is a tide from the divine ocean of life. "In the kingdom of the spirit love is only a latent possibility until the heart is touched by some other living personality toward whom love may go forth or the heart will remain loveless. It is in accordance with this law that the life of the soul which finds expression in faith and love and communion with God is conditional upon the life-giving power of a Spirit above itself."

Now, we think that this matter is one worthy of emphasis. There is a widespread tendency to-day to regard man as the chief agent in his own salvation. It is taught by some that the individual by his own innate power can subdue his evil passions and put himself in right relationship with God. By the strength of his own will man can beat back every evil that resists him and conquer his inward foes. He himself can suspend the controlling force of his selfish disposition and choose God as his chief good. Indeed, the change which we call regeneration, and which

we hold to be wrought by the Divine Spirit, is, we are told, nothing more than mere human reformation which can be effected by man's own volition. Such a view is wholly erroneous. Man can no more be the author of his spiritual life than he can be the author of his physical life. The one is as impossible as the other. Those who are in Christ are what they are, not by their own strength, but by the grace of God. Divine power alone can redeem the soul from destruction and make it radiant with light and love.

One who had been seeking to throw off the evil habits that had enslaved him tells us that, deep in humiliation, and tortured and condemned in his own esteem, he thought of the oft-repeated phrases about the power of the human will to resist temptation and found them as unsubstantial as the fabric of a dream. In his struggle for redemption no deliverance could be found by a reliance upon himself. Casting aside all pride of opinion, all thought of what the world might say or think, he went to the throne of Almighty God. There, on bended knees, he asked for light and strength—and they came. The curtains of the night parted and the way was clear. He arose a changed man. From an unhappy

and dissatisfied man, out of tune with the harmony of life and religion, he became happy and content, firmly anchored in faith and ready to testify from his own experience to the miraculous power of God to cleanse the souls of men.[38] Thus the Holy Spirit is the spiritual life-giver. It is He who is the moving and controlling agent in the world in the salvation of men and in the renovation of character. It is He who fashions the heart and endows men with spiritual power. It is He who breathes upon dead souls and awakens them to a new life. We are His workmanship. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration. and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

The question here arises, How is this change wrought in man? What is the precise manner in which this renewal of heart and mind takes place? By what means can the beginnings of this divine life be calculated and measured? What is the law by which the Holy Spirit works when He raises a soul from the death of sin to a life of righteousness? How can these things be? How this moral change is wrought no one can tell. No rule can be formulated as to the method

by which it takes place. No precise formula can be laid down as to the manner in which the Divine Spirit operates. God's work upon the human soul when He chases away the evil passions and awakens it to newness of life can no more be understood than His work upon the seed implanted in the soil when He awakens it to beauteous plant, and flower, and fruit. The magic touch of the Divine Spirit is too subtle for the sluggish gaze of man. Our Lord Himself likened the work of the Spirit to the wind that bloweth. "The wind," He says, "bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." We may partly observe and classify the results which flow from the spiritual life, but as to the manner in which the inner life is wrought our eyes are holden. We may give a description of the attending conditions but not of the inward causation.

To be sure, modern psychology seeks to analyze the life of the soul and to formulate the laws by which it is controlled. The spiritual life, like the topography of a country, is a thing to be surveyed, mapped out, and put into a chart. Religious experiences, like chem-

ical compounds, are put into the test tube and made to undergo analysis and classification. The history of the new life is set forth in formulas whose precision equals that of the laws of the physical universe.

In the nature of the case, there can be no scientific psychology of the birth from above. The new birth is an experience that does not come within the range of the laboratory. The life of God in the human heart may be described in its fruits, but its innermost nature and meaning does not yield to psychological analysis and measurement. The manner in which the spiritual life manifests itself in daily action can be set forth, but the forces at work within elude our grasp. No psychology can explain the wonderful transformation that takes place in the soul when the divine life comes in, flooding it with light and love. The works of such writers as Coe, Starbuck, and James furnish interesting reading, but as far as giving any real insight into causative forces they are failures. They describe the phenomena attending the new birth, but throw no light upon the inner causation.

Among the wonderful stories related by Harold Begbie in Twice Born Men none is more full of interest or demonstrates more

convincingly the power of the living Christ to regenerate the human soul than that which appears under the caption of "The Criminal." Joe, of whom the story is related, was a noted thief and burglar, a criminal high in his profession, the terror of the neighborhood in which he lived. For his theft and burglary he had spent seventeen years behind prison bars when he was but thirty and four years of age. A few nights after having been released from Dartmoor, where he had served a long term, he quarreled with another man in a public house. The two disputants adjourned to fight it out. Joe came out of the fight with his head half-split, his cheeks cut, and his face so smashed that he was scarcely recognizable. After having had his wounds dressed at a chemist's shop Joe went straight from the bandaging to the hall of the Salvation Army. With bruised and blackened eyes, swollen lips, and bandaged head he sat there unrecognized, listening to what they had to say. When the invitation was given Joe got up and walked to the penitent form. As he knelt down some who were about him knelt beside him and prayed for his soul. He got up saying that he was saved. "What happened," writes Begbie, "nobody knows. Joe

himself is unable to explain. He knelt there and prayed; he rose feeling that he had sufficent strength to make a fight for a clean life. He says he felt himself quite free of the net of crime."

How can these things be? Subliminal consciousness, says one. We are told that impressions and impulses which have been hidden in the subliminal region now become the center of action. Ideas which before were below the threshold of consciousness now arise above the threshold, displace the old ideas, and form the fulcrum with which the mind works. "To say that a man is 'converted' means, in these terms, that religious ideas, previously peripheral in his consciousness, now take a central place, and that religious aims form the habitual center of his energy." Possibly! But this is but a description of what happens and not an explanation of the forces that produce the new desires and give rise to the new life. The forces which cause the new ideas to displace the old, and which hold the new to the center of personal energy, still remain unexplained. The creative power which changes the governing disposition of the heart and which issues into all the fruits of holy living is as inscrutable

as before. The divine energy which recreates the soul and unites it to Christ in fellowship and love is still unapprehended by the consciousness of the subject.

Rider Haggard in his Regeneration, in which he gives an account of a number of remarkable conversions, of men in whose lives great moral changes had taken place, says: "Religious conversion seemed to be, on the whole, a spiritual process, whereas the carnal satisfaction was, or appeared to be, a physical weakness of the body. Therefore I could not understand how the spiritual conversion could suddenly and permanently affect or remove the physical desire, unless it were by the action of the phenomenon called miracle." Another writer in an attempt to account for these moral transformations says, "The only answer that can be given is that it is one with the great mysteries of the universe, similar in operation to vast cosmic forces whose action and effect we can see, but the inner source and secret of whose dynamic energy we cannot fathom, since we are irresistibly led back and back through all intermediate processes to God Himself, the Fountain Head and Reservoir of all power in the universe and in the soul of man."[39]

Attention must also be called to the fact that the birth from above is an experience of absolute necessity. It is a state of primal importance. The necessity of the new birth our Lord laid down as fundamental. Regeneration is the door through which men are admitted into the kingdom of heaven. The spiritual life is entered in the same way in which the physical life is entered—by birth. The soul in its desire, its motives, its aims, and its habits must be changed. Nothing less than this transformation in the inner disposition and in the outer conduct will meet the case. From a heart unmoved by God, a will averse to the divine purpose, a spirit opposed to Christ, a grasping and selfish ambition, a cold indifference to men in need we must be delivered and brought into harmony with the mind and will of Jesus Christ. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "When Kant treats of the radical evil of human nature, he makes the remarkable statement, that, if a good will is to appear in us, this cannot happen through a partial improvement, nor through any reform, but only through a revolution, a total overturn within us, that is to be compared to a new creation."

In addition to this, no permanent progress or advance can be made in human civilization unless human nature is changed. The race is doomed to utter failure and defeat unless it becomes permeated with the spirit, the mind, the ideals of Jesus Christ. This alone can solve the problems of the present and of all time. Political greed and corruption, industrial divisions and strife, social wrongs and injustices can be done away with only as men and women come in touch with the Divine Spirit and receive from Him a new spirit of love. "The absolute imperativeness of that new birth, the birth out of selfishness into love, out of social strife into social service, is the only hope for the new democracy." The basis of the world's redemption and freedom is the new life and power which the Holy Spirit alone can impart.

It must also be borne in mind that the life from above is a dynamic experience, a glorious reality. It is not merely a doctrine; it is a state of heart in which multitudes of souls have entered. Men and women who have been in the horrible pit of sin have been delivered and lifted up to glorious freedom by this divine power. Those who have been impure in thought, haughty of disposition, sel-

fish in will, and corrupt in conduct have, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, been made pure in heart and Christlike in character. These are facts which are as undeniable as the sunlight or as life itself. The miserable outcasts who have been taken out of horrible shame and vileness and made self-respecting and who have become ardent savers of the lost testify to the renewing grace of the Spirit of God. Many are they who know that they have passed from death unto life. Many are they of whose hearts Jesus Christ has taken possession.

It will scarcely be necessary, we think, to state that what we have said concerning the birth from above applies to adults and not to children and those of tender years. There is no disposition to insist on the word "regeneration" as the proper word to designate the saved state of the child. Indeed, that word as used in the Scriptures applies to men and women and not to children. It is for those who have strayed from the Father's house and love, that the doctrine of the new birth is in order. The child from the beginning, by virtue of the atonement of Jesus Christ, belongs to the kingdom of God, and when properly instructed and trained, experiences

no moral convulsion or revolution, but undergoes a normal spiritual development. From the dawn of its existence, the child is the subject of a divine, gracious influence and is in a state of grace; he is God's child, not by his own choice to be sure, but by the merits of our Lord. He is no alien from the heavenly kingdom, but is a member of God's spiritual household, and may unfold Christward as naturally as the flower unfolds to the sun. He may grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord as never to forfeit his union with Christ. And there are many who realize that their religious life has continued from childhood into mature years without any decisive break. In the lives of not a few, "childhood, manhood, age, and death" have been "all alike divine." We doubt not that literally thousands of men and women have from the days of childhood been faithful and devout followers of Christ, and have ever been conscious of fellowship with their divine Lord.

While, therefore, sudden and cataclysmic changes take place in the hearts of men and women whose lives are depraved, it is none the less true that the grace of God works silently and unseen, though none the less

effectively, in the hearts of little children and in the lives of those who are instructed in the ways of truth.

Like the silent, constant force of the sunlight, or the gentle, gracious influence of the rain, it continually surrounds such, redeeming their lives from evil and filling their souls with joy and peace. Like the permeating leaven which works unseen, or the seed which grows unobserved, the Divine Spirit, often without demonstration, renews human hearts and fills them with the life of heaven.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGION IN ACTION

The first question in the catechism of the Westminster divines is, "What is the chief end of man?" and is answered thus: "The chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever." The first question in the new Presbyterian Catechism, and which displaces that in the Shorter Catechism, is, "What do we most need to know?" and is answered as follows: "We most need to know what God would have us believe and do." One writer in comparing the answer of the new Catechism with that of the old, says that the new is a decided improvement upon the old, and adds: "We should have put the doing before the believing, and perhaps have left out the believing, as it is so much less than the doing."[40] The observation, we think, rightly indicates where the emphasis in the Christian religion is being placed at the present day. But while we are fully convinced that the surrendering of the believing

would be disastrous to the Christian faith, we are nevertheless persuaded that the essence of Christianity consists not in believing but in being and in doing. While all great religion must, as we have already seen, possess worthy views of God, man, and the way of salvation, yet the Christian believer must be judged primarily by character and conduct rather than by the content of his belief. While ideas in religion, as in every other phase of human life, govern for weal or woe, the marks of Christian discipleship lie not in worship, confession, or creed, but in an inner disposition which works itself out in a life filled with the virtues of kindness, tenderness, sympathy, and loving service. The inner life must find its counterpart in the outer life. Faith must find expression in conduct and deed. As the life of the seed realizes itself in beauteous flower and luscious fruit, so the life of God in the soul must find realization in the gracious fruits of the Spirit—in benevolence and charity, good will and helpfulness, sacrifice and brotherhood. Thus the very heart of the Christian religion is an unselfish love manifested in the form of a disinterested and useful service to man.

"The whole duty of man," says Peabody,

"is not to enjoy God forever, but to descend with the grace of God to the help of man. The Christian Church is not a place of refuge from the world, but a place of training for the world. The Christian life is not a retreat from stormy winds and tides of woe, but an advance through them; not a hiding beneath the mercy seat, but a rising from one's seat for the sake of mercy. The evidence of Christian discipleship is not ecclesiastical or doctrinal, but ethical, social, political, industrial, human. In short, the Christian religion does not occupy a separated, even though it be an elevated, plateau of life, but descends like a fertilizing stream to the world below."[41]

Turning to the life of Jesus, we find that it was a life of action, of conduct, of service. It was a ceaseless giving of Himself, a ceaseless flowing out of His energy for the good of others. Christ lived a life of absolute devotion to the highest moral and spiritual good of His fellow men. He was always thinking about the welfare of other people. His was the perfectly useful life; service and self-giving were a passion with Him. Our Lord was the Founder of a gospel of grace, the lover and uplifter of the poor, a healer of men, a humanitarian who gave His life to the

world. He was the supreme servant of mankind, the chief of burden-bearers. He stands at the head of humanity by virtue of a service that did not stop short of the gift of Himself on the cross. The years of His public ministry He spent in going about doing good, helping men, loving them, sacrificing for them. By the seashore, the wayside, and in the market place He associated with all classes and devoted His life in an unselfish ministry to them. By precept and example He taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Recognizing not the class distinctions of which we make so much at the present day, His ministering hand was outstretched to all irrespective of birth or rank. In the sick, the sorrowing, and the social outcast He was profoundly interested, and whenever human need addressed itself to Him His power was displayed to heal and to bless. He healed the leper, gave sight to the blind, fed the hungry, forgave the sin of publican and harlot, and gave life to the dead. He lifted up the fallen, restored strength to the weak, hope to the despondent, and filled the hearts of men with a strange joy. He raised up men and women out of the mire into which they had fallen, cleansed their lives of sin, and

made them worthy children of the heavenly Father. To human weakness He brought divine power, to human ignorance divine wisdom, to human sorrow divine sympathy, to human penitence divine mercy, and to human sin divine purity. And it must not be overlooked that the whole round of the earthly activities of Jesus was a species of service. Whether teaching or preaching, feeding the hungry or heartening the despairing, consoling the sick or raising the dead, His constant aim was to bring men to their highest well-being. In every aspect of His mission He sought the material and spiritual welfare of mankind.

> And so the Word had breath, and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought.

When we examine the teachings of Jesus we discover that the same emphasis is laid on the glory and grandeur of service as is laid on it in His ministries of healing and blessing. According to the words of our Lord, the spirit of love, service, and sacrifice is the one essential requirement for the heavenly kingdom. The Christian believer is known by the manner of his life. By their

fruits ye shall know them. And they who possess not the fruits of long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and love are not only without the divine kingdom but will finally be destroyed. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Again, those who hear His words but do them not are likened to the man who builds his house upon the sand. Again, says Jesus, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

The glory of service is nowhere more clearly taught than in the incident which relates the visit of the mother of John and James to Jesus. One day the mother of the two brothers came to Jesus requesting Him to grant to her two sons chief places in His kingdom. "Grant," she says, "that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left in thy kingdom." The two brothers were desirous to occupy places of authority in the new kingdom which it was supposed Jesus was going to set up in Jerusalem. The ambition of the young men was great. It soared to the seats of honor. It is possible that James and John, who had re-

ceived special favors from the Lord, claimed precedence over the rest of the disciples. They with Peter had been allowed to be present at the transfiguration and at the raising of the daughter of Jairus, while the others had been excluded. At any rate, they assume a dictatorial spirit and are the first to present their claim to the chief places in the coming kingdom. The ten on learning of the request of the two brethren are moved with indignation against them. Their indignation arises, however, not because they are less ambitious than John and James, but because the two disciples had dared to interview Jesus and put forward their claim without consulting the whole band of disciples.

Jesus calls the twelve into His presence and tells them that they are wrong; they have fallen into a grievous error. The spirit that they have shown is not the spirit of the heavenly Father, but of the Evil One. The self-seeking spirit characterizes not the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of the world. That road leads to destruction. "Fling away ambition; by that sin angels fell." The principles underlying the kingdom of heaven are the opposite of those which underlie the kingdom of earth. In the latter kingdom the great

ones are those who sit in authority and rule. He who is great according to the world's notion of greatness is he who exacts service, lords it over men, and deals arbitrarily with them. The princes of the Gentiles, regarding the people as made to serve them, seek the throne not for the good of their subjects, but for their own promotion and glory.

But it shall not be so, says Jesus, among you. The ideas of temporal power, earthly dominion, and visible authority that filled the minds of the disciples are not to be associated with His kingdom. Nor does such external power constitute real greatness. The ideal of greatness is found in a life filled with loving deeds; this was the test and measure of His own perfection, and it must be the test and measure of greatness in others. He who is great, says Christ, is he who serves. The great ones of the kingdom of God are the most zealous servants. Greatness depends not on position and place and power to rule, but on character and conduct, and consists not in seeking one's own personal advancement, but in doing good to others. The supreme test of greatness is a willingness to minister to the needy and no one can be accounted a disciple of Jesus who has not learned this

lesson. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister." Turning to His disciples, Jesus reminds them that He has sought no honor, no authority, no exaltation, but stands in their midst as their servant and friend. He has attained to no dominion, no temporal power, but has made Himself the servant of mankind, loving them, working for them, and giving His life in their behalf. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. And Jesus is the greatest of all because He has done a service that transcends that which any other has done. And this is the example that He sets before all who would enter His kingdom. He who is to sit by the Master's side must walk the path of toil and service that He trod. We become worthy of the places on the right hand and on the left only as we deny ourselves as Jesus did; these are positions not conferred, but achieved by loving deeds of helpfulness. These are honors not bestowed as rewards, but which follow as the result of an unselfish and exalted service to humankind.

Of similar import is the incident recorded in the thirteenth chapter of Saint John, in which an account is given of the washing of

the feet of the disciples by our Lord. The evangelist tells us that, supper being ended, Jesus poured water into a basin and washed His disciples' feet and wiped them with the towel wherewith He was girded. Here again our Lord reveals His character and will and proclaims that the true purpose of His work is ministrative. In the custom of the time He gives His disciples an object lesson in lowly service. By this act He confirms His leadership and demonstrates beyond question that the true end of life is a capacity to stoop and serve. Henceforth His disciples cannot mistake the nature of His mission. Never again will He appear to their imagination as a conqueror with sword and scepter, but as a servant with towel and basin. He has forever proven that the ultimate law of religion is to be found in deeds of practical ministry to human needs. And, rising from the table, He says, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." The towel—the towel of humble service—has been called the coat-of-arms of Christianity. The disciples have to be sympathetic toward one another and bear one another's burdens as Christ has borne theirs. They have to prove their right to leadership, as well as their dis-

cipleship, as He has proven His right to the mastery of men by the desire to minister. In the self-surrender of love they must give themselves in supreme devotion to God and in unselfish ministry to mankind.

It is striking and impressive to observe that whenever Jesus withdrew from the multitudes to renew His strength in communion with God He always returned to take up anew the task of teaching, of healing, of blessing. This is seen in a remarkable manner in His descent to the plain after His transfiguration on the mount. Jesus went up into the mount with three of His disciples and was transfigured before them. His face shone as the sun and His raiment was white and glistening. Moses and Elias appeared, and as they talked with Jesus a cloud of glory enveloped them. A voice out of the cloud said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The cloud vanished, the glory departed, and Jesus descended from the mount to heal the lunatic boy. From the mount He came down to the plains, the villages, the streets, the fishing boats to heal the diseases of men and to bid the sorrow and misery of the world depart. And Jesus was transfigured with a greater glory, the glory of sympathy, kindness, and

mercy, as He brought healing to the body and mind of the diseased child than when He was in the company of the Prophets. The mount was the place of preparation for duty, work, and achievement. It was the spot where Jesus beheld a new vision which clothed Him with new power and fitted Him for the patient fulfillment of His human task. And it was only when Christ cured the demoniac boy that meaning was given to the transfiguration. Apart from self-sacrifice and toil, the transfiguration would have remained incomplete. Only as divine virtue went out from Him in the form of personal service was the glory of the mount truly revealed.

The life of self-denial and self-sacrifice that Jesus lived became the pattern for the lives of His disciples and followers. The constant aim of Christ was to awaken and foster in the hearts of others the same passion for self-devotion that possessed Him. He taught and labored and suffered that He might win men to the highest type of life—the life of Godlike sympathy, self-giving, and helpfulness. As Jesus gave Himself in loving service to the bodies and souls of men, so His followers were bidden to do the same. Our Lord's disciples, commissioned by Him and

imbued with His spirit, went out to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils. These first representatives of Christ were to make proof of their ministry by illimitable good works among the needy. He put His mind into them, His tenderness toward the unfortunate, His love for the poor, His sympathy for the outcast, His mercy for the sinner, His forgiveness for the penitent, and sent them forth to witness for Him in persistent, unselfish, helpful kindness. "A new responsibility for the weak, the sick, the outcast, the prisoner, the slave, for women and children, became the primary evidence of discipleship." And the compassion and sympathy which characterized the ministry of the disciples were dominant elements in the life of the early Church. "The earliest records of Christian worship report as an essential part of ritual the deposit of alms for the relief of the needy. The earliest expressions of Christian prayer gather up into the petition of the congregation, the help of the helpless and the cry of the poor. The Christian religion became a vast movement of philanthropy. Compassion, sympathy, charity, brotherhood—these words were superimposed in the structure of the Christian character on

rectitude, uprightness, righteousness. Christian discipleship was not complete until the disciple, like his Master, rose from the table of abundance and bent as a servant to minister to human needs."[42]

The idea of service so regnant in the thought and life of Jesus, and so wondrously exemplified in the ministry of the disciples, must be the ruling conception of every Christian believer. The religion of Jesus calls us to action, to duty, to achievement. We must live again the life of our Lord, walk in His steps, and fill the passing days with golden deeds. We must be possessed with a consuming passion to bear men's burdens, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and care for the stranger. Like our Master, we must lift up the fallen, comfort the sorrowing, strengthen the weak, visit the sick, and bring help to the helpless. We must look earthward as well as heavenward, manward as well as Godward. Indeed, no adequate expression can be given to the Christian religion until the followers of Christ have embodied in their lives to its fullest extent the second great law given by Jesus—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "The only way to serve Him that I know of is to help Him lift this poor, blunder-

ing, sinning, and suffering world up into the light and blessedness of His knowledge and His love. I can serve God only in the person of His children, because it is only in their person that He is in need."

"As the Master put Himself under the whole world, that He might lift up the ignorant to a larger knowledge, the impoverished to a greater life, the wicked to a holy life, the vicious to a purer life, so, if we are followers of Him, we ought to put ourselves under our little world, be it the family, be it the city, be it the State, be it the nation, and do what we can to lift up that little world to a worthier, nobler, larger, and happier life."[43]

History tells us of a generous florist who, having stocked his own garden with rare flowers, made excursions into the surrounding district, planting his choice things in field and hedge until the landscape smiled with a new beauty. The Christian, bearing in his own life the fruits of the Spirit, must go forth with the seeds of love, kindness, and good will and plant them in the waste and desert places of the earth. He must plant the holy seed of noble thoughts, lofty aspirations, and unselfish desires in human hearts that are unfruitful until the barren places blossom and

become beauteous and divine. He must be sympathetic, generous, and loving to all men, and must, from a motive of pure unselfishness, give himself without stint to the work of lifting them up to lives of hope and usefulness.

Be strong!
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift;
We have hard work to do and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle, face it, 'tis God's gift.

This conception of religion given by Jesus is one that is dominating the thought of the world at the present day. Christianity is seen as never before to be duty, helpfulness, work; it is action, conflict, life. No conviction has gripped the heart of society more firmly at the present time than that which is impelling men to place themselves and their goods at the service of their fellows. We have come to learn that it is not enough to wish others well, but that according to the measure of our capacity we must do them good. It is this impulse to serve that has interested men in social, political, and industrial reform and that is filling the earth with dreams and schemes of social betterment. It is this that is at the root of all attempts to eliminate poverty, ignorance, and disease from human life

and to make the world a more wholesome and attractive place in which to live. John Watson asserts that the old principle of every man for himself is dying out from national politics, from the organization of commerce, from the life of society, and is bound to die out from religion. Never before have so many movements and institutions been organized for the physical betterment and spiritual well-being of mankind as now. Never before have men and women so devoted themselves to the alleviation of human suffering and misery and to the reconstruction of a new and better society than in the opening years of this twentieth century. Never before have all classes so combined against all forms of oppression and vice and sought to establish conditions under which men shall become free, strong, and happy as during the present age. It is in accord with these convictions and demands that a certain writer says that the man who dies rich and who has made no benefactions to social institutions dies in disgrace. He who hoards his wealth and fails to contribute to the material and moral uplift of his fellows, lives for naught and dies beneath the disapproval of human society. Thus we have been led to see that all must

seek the common welfare instead of each one striving for his own supremacy.

The change that has taken place in recent years in the popular mind concerning the nobility and grandeur of service is highly significant. A few years ago a referendum was carried out in a great daily of the city of Paris the object of which was to ascertain the greatest name the French nation had produced during the nineteenth century. Fifteen million answers were sent in. When the votes were counted it was found that the name of Louis Pasteur was first on the list, while that of Napoleon the Great stood fourth. Such a verdict by the French people as to its greatest hero indicates a vast change in the popular ideals of greatness. That the hero of war should be displaced by the hero of science proves that new standards of greatness are being created. Pasteur stands supreme among the great men of his country because he had a noble compassion for his fellows and interpreted life in terms of service. He stands at the summit of human greatness because he, as a scientist, spent his days and nights in toil and patient investigation for the prevention and relief of human suffering. His memory is enshrined in the hearts of his

countrymen, and, indeed, of the whole world, because he had a profound interest in mankind and sought out new ways to control and avert disease and pain. And what has transpired in France is happening in other countries. The men and women who reach the heights of life and are the most deeply revered are those who pour out their lives in great resistless tides of sacrifice and love for their fellow men. In spite of the political greed, the industrial oppression, the personal self-seeking of the modern world, it is on every hand recognized that those stand first in honor who deliver the oppressed and carry forward those schemes that seek the welfare of the race. On a monument erected to the memory of "Mother Bickerdyke," a faithful army nurse of the Civil War, who ministered to the wounded and dying on the battlefield, are the words of General Sherman: "She outranks me." Thus true greatness and fame come to those who place the well-being of their fellows before their own personal gain and whose lives are full of noble deeds. There is no surer way for one to win human love and esteem and gain immortality than to give himself without reserve to the common good of man.

History tells us of an Egyptian king who employed an architect to build for him a tower as a monument of his power and greatness. When the tower was finished, the architect covered it with plaster on which he boldly inscribed the king's name. But beneath the plaster deep in the solid granite the architect engraved his own name. The ravages of the years soon destroyed the plaster and as it crumbled and fell the royal name disappeared, but fixed in the stone beneath remained the name of the architect. Many of the achievements of life have but a fleeting, a passing value. The years slowly but surely wear down the piles of stone erected to preserve the fame of their builders. The towering monument may for a brief period keep green the memory of its founder, but with the gathering years it passes away. The man who lives only for himself, who fights for position and seeks great riches, but who fails to make in some way the world better and happier has but written his name in the shifting sand. Such a man is doomed to disappointment. The achievements of enduring fame are those that arise from love, service, and self-sacrifice. The life that is filled with kind thoughts, a tender sympathy, and deeds

of mercy outlives not only the monuments of men but the world itself. "One made a piece of costly embroidery, putting into it finest threads of gold and silver. Then the work was laid away for a time, and when it was looked at again the whole delicate and beautiful fabric had been destroyed—nothing was left of it but the gold and silver threads. These were bright as ever in imperishable beauty. The only threads in the web of a life which will endure are the gold and silver threads which love for Christ and love for men put in." He that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

It must not be overlooked that the test of Christian discipleship is also, according to our Lord, the test of the final judgment of mankind. The line of cleavage between the good and the bad at the final assize will be conduct, service, life. This is taught in a remarkable manner in the twenty-fifth chapter of Saint Matthew, which in many ways is the most notable of the recorded utterances of Christ. In this passage Jesus gives us the standard by which the race is judged. The great white throne is set. The Judge is there. Before Him are gathered all nations and He separates them one from another as a shep-

herd divideth his sheep from the goats. The sheep are set on the right hand and the goats on the left. What is the basis of division between the saved and the lost? On what principle is the one class separated from the other? How do they divide? By creeds and confessions, by rites and ceremony, by faiths and unfaiths? Not at all! In the commendation and condemnation of men only one test is made. Men are judged good or bad according as to whether they have rendered or failed to render service to their fellows. The fitness or unfitness of men for the heavenly mansions is shown in the way they have fulfilled or failed to fulfill the simple humanities of life. Not a word is said about ritual, ceremony, or church membership. All such matters are wholly ignored. As men stand before the judgment seat only one question is in the mind of the Judge, Have they loved and served and sacrificed for those in need? That repentance, faith in Christ, and worthy views of life and destiny are absolutely essential no one will deny. But these things are not the end of life; they are the means to the end. The end of life is love to God and man manifested in the form of an exalted and helpful service to humankind.

What have you done? Have you fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, clad the naked, visited the sick and the imprisoned? That is the simple but severe test. And upon this test—the exhibition of love and the practice of good works—Jesus throws the whole weight of eternity. The operation of this law decides the destiny of the race.

Moreover, as we lift our eyes from the throne of judgment to the heights of glory the vision afforded us is that of redeemed souls whose chief joy is found in incessant toil. The redeemed serve God day and night in His temple. "There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him." Heaven is not a place of inaction, not a place of passive enjoyment, but a realm of congenial pursuits and ennobling occupations. It is a country where the saved will not merely enjoy an endless felicity, but where they will serve one another for ever and ever in a perfect social life. It is a place where the soul will go on growing, achieving, acquiring larger capacities and new powers which will be used in ministries of love. Heaven is love, action, work, going on forever. It is fellow-

ship with beauty, goodness, truth; it is victory, triumph, joy; it is life. It is the company of all those whose sole delight will be to do the will of God and toil with Him in building the new heavens and the new earth.

APPENDIX

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

PAGE

NOTE 1 16
The Homiletic Review. Vol. 62, No. 5, page 342.

NOTE 2 18
The Essence of Christianity. Page 157.

NOTE 3 24
The Homiletic Review. Vol. 43, No. 1, page 47.

NOTE 4 24
The Cruciality of the Cross. Page 47.

NOTE 5 27
George P. Mains, Modern Thought and Traditional Faith. Page 159.

NOTE 6 36
The Homiletic Review. Vol. 65, No. 2, page 142.

NOTE 7 40
Levi Gilbert, Dynamic Christianity. Page 141.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

NOTE 8 48
Farrar, Life of Christ.

NOTE 9 49
The Homiletic Review. Vol. 44, No. 5, page 413.

NOTE 10 56
Clow, The Cross in Christian Experience. Page 200.

NOTE 11 63
The Christian Advocate. Vol. 89, No. 46, page 1589.

NOTE 12 65
Zion's Herald. Vol. 91, No. 44, page 1390.

Appendix

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

PAGE

Note 13 68
Snowdon, The Basal Beliefs of Christianity. Page 115.

Note 14 74
Orr, The Progress of Dogma. Page 237.

Note 15 87
Jonathan Edwards, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.

Note 16 96
The Homiletic Review. Vol. 60, No. 4, pages 297, 298.

Note 17 98
Quoted from Stevens, The Christian Doctrine of Salvation. Page 436.

Note 18 99
The Cross in Christian Experience. Page 16.

Note 19 102
Stevens, The Christian Doctrine of Salvation. Page 354.

Note 20 110
Fisher, History of Christian Doctrine. Page 442.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

Note 21 122
Quoted from A. H. Strong, Systematic Theology. Vol. 2, page 560.

Note 22 127
Ethics. Page 328.

Note 23 133
Snowdon, The Basal Beliefs of Christianity. Page 48.

Note 24 137
Snowdon, The World a Spiritual System. Page 269.

Note 25 138
Wesley, On Original Sin. Page 259.

Appendix

PAGE

Note 26 142
Modern Sermons by World Scholars. Vol. 1, page 6.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

Note 27 152
William DeWitt Hyde, Sin and Its Forgiveness. Page 26.

Note 28 155
Quoted from Gilbert, Dynamic Christianity. Page 37.

Note 29 162
William DeWitt Hyde, Sin and Its Forgiveness. Page 60.

Note 30 169
Workman, At Onement. Page 53.

Note 31 172
The Homiletic Review. Vol. 56, No. 4, page 272.

Note 32 174
An Outline of Christian Theology. Page 256.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

Note 33 188
Sermon by Alexander McLaren, The Fulness of God.

Note 34 190
Zion's Herald. Vol. 91, No. 47, page 1485.

Note 35 199
Things Fundamental. Page 31.

Note 36 206
The World's Great Sermons. Vol. 8, page 64.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

Note 37 211
Clow, The Cross in Christian Experience. Page 107.

Note 38 214
The Literary Digest. Vol. 48, No. 3, page 112.

Appendix

PAGE

Note 39 219
Gilbert, Dynamic Christianity. Page 94.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

Note 40 225
The Independent. Vol. 72, No. 3314, page 1285.
Note 41 227
Peabody, Jesus Christ and the Christian Character. Page 275.
Note 42 238
Peabody, Jesus Christ and the Christian Character. Page 218.
Note 43 239
The Homiletic Review. Vol. 60, No. 1, page 59.

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